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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



THESIS

**THE RESIGNATION OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
JAMES WEBB: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE PRESENT**

by

Bradly F. Hanner

March 2000

Thesis Advisor:
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20000609 040

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE March 2000		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE : The Resignation of Secretary of the Navy James Webb: A Perspective from the Present			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Hanner, Bradly F.				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) This thesis explains the resignation of James Webb as Secretary of the Navy in February 1988. Multiple interviews conducted by the author and several others revealed the combination of politics and personal motivation behind his departure. In an era when defense expenditures were beginning to wane, Webb's insistence on maintaining the United States Navy's force structure in the face of Secretary of Defense Carlucci's unwillingness to do the same, led to his resignation. His opposition to the reduction in force structure was rooted in his fundamental belief that it was unwise for the United States, as a maritime nation, to undercut a service upon which it relied so heavily. Examination of Webb's professional life, with an emphasis on his numerous writings, conveyed his protracted association with, and critical thinking on, issues of military and national defense policy. Research into his professional development was central to the investigation. It established a consistency between his position on the Navy force structure issue and related topics about which he wrote and spoke concerning roles, missions, and composition of the American military.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Force Structure, Secretary of the Navy, James H. Webb, Jr.			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 109	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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**THE RESIGNATION OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JAMES WEBB: A
PERSPECTIVE FROM THE PRESENT**

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Captain, United States Marine Corps
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1994

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT**

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explains the resignation of James Webb as Secretary of the Navy in February 1988. Multiple interviews conducted by the author and several others revealed the combination of politics and personal motivation behind his departure. In an era when defense expenditures were beginning to wane, Webb's insistence on maintaining the United States Navy's force structure in the face of Secretary of Defense Carlucci's unwillingness to do the same, led to his resignation. His opposition to the reduction in force structure was rooted in his fundamental belief that it was unwise for the United States, as a maritime nation, to undercut a service upon which it relied so heavily. Examination of Webb's professional life, with an emphasis on his numerous writings, conveyed his protracted association with, and critical thinking on, issues of military and national defense policy. Research into his professional development was central to the investigation. It established a consistency between his position on the Navy force structure issue and related topics about which he wrote and spoke concerning roles, missions, and composition of the American military.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

On February 22, 1987, James Henry Webb, Jr. resigned his position as the sixty-sixth Secretary of the Navy, having served less than a year in that position. Some viewed his resignation as the culmination of a personality conflict between him and Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci. Others saw a man who gave up his job because he did not get his way over an ostensibly trivial issue. Still others consider Webb's resignation in the broader context of contemporary international events, seeing consistency in his motivation for taking the course of action he did. Having spent a great portion of his adult life thinking, writing, and speaking about the role of the United States military in the world, Webb said he was confronted with a situation that he felt he could not, in good conscience, support. His resignation, in this view, was consistent with his deeply held views on this subject.

Political appointees, cabinet members, and politicians move through Washington, D.C., with regularity. So why is this particular episode worth interest? The principal figure of this study, James Webb, was, by his own admission, an atypical choice for the position of the Secretary of the Navy (Interview, January 19, 1999). Instead of coming from the more typical legal or academic background, Webb was a writer and, to a lesser extent, a journalist. Additionally, not only did he come to government with a rather extensive knowledge of the military, but he refused to compromise his position to find a

resolution to a fiscal battle that he claimed was a political ploy to avoid a Pentagon battle with the Congress (Interview, February 11, 1999). Resignations from public office are rare enough based solely on ideological disagreement with superiors. In this case, Webb was asked to condone and contribute to a policy that violated not only what he believed to be an unwise strategic choice, but was, in his view, based on political expediency (Interview, January 19, 1999).

Several events contributed in some form to the final outcome of Webb stepping down from the Navy's senior civilian position. First was his extensive background associated with the military. This association began as the son of a career Air Force officer, continued through his enrollment at the U.S. Naval Academy and subsequent commissioning and service as a Marine officer, was sustained through service with the House Veteran's Affairs Committee and teaching at his alma mater, and culminated with four years of service in the Pentagon. His intimate knowledge of the service and belief in what role the military should play in national defense dovetailed with the Reagan administration's plan to rebuild the force structure of the Navy to 600 ships.

In conflict, though not clearly so at the time of its ratification, was the 1985 Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, more commonly referred to as the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act. The by-product of the Act spelled a decrease in federal spending that placed a heavy burden on the Department of Defense. Meanwhile, on the international scene, a new premier came to power in the Soviet Union. Unbeknownst to many at the time, Mikhail Gorbachev would soon become a name synonymous with

normalizing relations with the West and ultimately conceding communism's defeat in the Cold War.

While the facts surrounding the latter two events are fairly well known, Webb's background and the manner in which his service as Secretary of the Navy intersected with them are less clear and warrant an in-depth investigation.

Because contemporary media coverage seemed to rather superficially address Webb's resignation, it is worth considering whether or not the popular interpretation was accurate or complete. Furthermore, this case study illustrates the manner in which political, budgetary, and national security interests interact by examining the conflicting arguments and their subsequent resolution.

B. THESIS OVERVIEW

1. Purpose

This study investigates the resignation of James Webb from the position of Secretary of the Navy. The analysis provides insight into the professional development of Webb while coincidentally examining his close association with and critical thinking on issues of military and national security relevance. It attempts to clarify the underlying causes of his resignation based on his views regarding the structure of the American military, and what roles it should perform in protection of American interests abroad. Secondly, the study provides insight into how conflicts of interest within seemingly unified government departments causes tension and dissent among the principal players involved in the issues.

2. Methodology

A study of this type, in which personal opinions regarding the events are many, depends largely on gaining first hand accounts of what actually happened. Unlike a quantitative study, very little numerical or other "hard" data exists to prove, let alone clarify, one side's perspective when compared to the other. For this reason, it is important to examine the actual event and the circumstances surrounding the event from objective or uninterested sources. While the memoirs of the participants are invaluable, the outside, contemporary sources provide a context for the event portrayed against the national landscape as well as explaining other reasons, beyond those offered by the participants, why certain events did or did not occur.

The heart of this research lies in the approximately five hours of interview time the author spent with Webb himself. The interview sessions provided rich and informative detail that addressed his resignation as well as his development as a prolific and critical writer of think pieces that challenged those in positions of leadership to make hard decisions and never compromise security for expediency or ease.

Augmenting the Webb interviews are inputs from both senior civilian and military leaders who surrounded or contributed to his resignation. Their testimony demonstrates how clear events were, in some cases, and, in other cases, how differently the issues were viewed.

Media articles and editorials from the time tie together the assertions of those surrounding Webb's resignation. Additionally, in order to construct a backdrop against

which this debate and resignation occurred, international and domestic issues of the day are described to set this episode's place in history.

3. Outline

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter contains background information as well as defining the purpose of the research. It also describes the method of research and gives an overview of the rest of the study. Chapter II puts the Navy Secretary's role in historical context by describing the position's responsibilities as defined by law and demonstrating how three previous Secretaries have influenced the Department through their actions or policies. It also brings the foreign and domestic concerns of the time period into light that relate to Webb's resignation. The third chapter essentially traces Webb's life from boyhood to adulthood demonstrating the way in which he developed an appreciation for and an understanding of the military's role in American defense. Additionally, coverage of several of Webb's writings is included in order to depict how pertinent his writings are in reinforcing the issues about which he has spoken. It follows him through his time in government service until he left office in 1988. Chapter IV examines the aftermath of Webb's resignation while Chapter V concludes the case study and provides recommendations for further research.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

Many different factors contribute to explaining Secretary Webb's resignation. Inherent to any explanation of his service as Navy Secretary is understanding the legal license and limitations bestowed on Secretaries of the Navy under the provisions of Title 10 of the United States Code.

Within those provisions several secretaries have served tenures that were noteworthy based on decisions they made or agendas they pursued. Their service illuminates the manner in which practical exercises of the secretaries' prerogatives were not necessarily spelled out by the letter of the law.

Examining Secretary Webb's tenure would be incomplete without understanding the world events or the domestic issues during his time in office. The middle of the 1980's was a period of change for the United States defense establishment. In addition to becoming more heavily involved with issues in the Middle East and the Islamic world, the Russian bear was still *the* peer competitor with which the United States had to contend. In Washington, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 was forcing military leaders to rethink issues of interoperability and command authority while, a year earlier, a bill sponsored by the Congressional trio of Gramm, Rudman, and Hollings was forcing the Defense Department to cut its budget which had expanded under the sponsorship of the Reagan administration earlier in the decade.

B. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

Title 10 of the United States Code defines the responsibilities of American armed forces and their leadership. More specifically, section 5013 of the Code identifies the requirements of a Navy Secretary. The law encompasses many aspects of the Navy Department for which the Secretary has cognizance. These responsibilities include: 1) recruiting, training, and administering naval personnel, 2) organizing, supplying, equipping, servicing, mobilizing, and demobilizing both personnel and material, and 3) constructing, maintaining, and repairing military equipment and structures necessary to maintain the force composition (Title 10, 1995).

Despite the American military system that values civilian control of the military, the service secretaries are not allowed direct operational control of their respective services. The specifics of where the Secretary has authority are further outlined in subsection (c) of section 5013. The subsection (c) directives encompass a wide range of activities and functions for which the Secretary is responsible. For example, the Secretary is directed to implement policies and programs that support the national security objectives and policies of the administration. In addition to carrying out the policy, program, and budget decisions of the administration and effecting efficient integration of Navy Department activities with other Defense Department functions, the law also directs the Secretary to satisfy the operational requirements of the specified and unified combatant commands (Title 10, 1995). The reference to the specified and unified commands is indicative of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. Under this law the

command authority of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the various theater commanders was expanded in order to emphasize the importance of joint operations while simplifying and strengthening the operational command of the forces under their control (Locher, 1996).

Other subsections direct the Secretary to perform other duties prescribed by law or the Secretary of Defense and the President, as well as to advise Congress, with Defense Secretary approval, on matters concerning the Defense Department. The final subsection of section 5013 instructs the Secretary of the Navy to exercise initiative in forming his staff and defining the roles and offices of uniformed and civilian employees of the Department of the Navy not specified by law (Title 10, 1995).

The provisions allowed for under section 5013 of Title 10 are rather broad in defining that which is expected of the Secretary of the Navy. While some directives are vague with respect to exactly what is expected of the office in a particular situation, other portions indicate to what extent the Secretary is to involve himself in the process of command. Particularly relevant to this case study are paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (c) and the entirety of subsection (e) of section 5013. The clauses found in subsection (c) concern the implementation of policies and programs in support of national security and the prompt execution of policy, program, and budget decisions of the administration. Subsection (e) permits the Secretary of the Navy to counsel the Congress, after consulting the Defense Secretary, on matters pertaining to the Department of Defense.

Secretary James Webb held distinct personal views on just how the American military should be structured to pursue matters of national security. He voiced his opinions to his civilian superiors within the Department of Defense and he also shared his thoughts with peers and superiors through written memoranda. Subsection (c) relates to punctual fulfillment of budget directives. This is particularly relevant when seen in the light of how a fiscal debate, coupled with firm beliefs regarding the type of naval power the U.S. should possess in order to support the nation's foreign policy interests, led to Webb stepping down as Secretary of the Navy. Though not Navy specific, the scope of his opinions seemingly concerned the very topic addressed in subsection (e) though he did not take the opportunity as the Navy Secretary to undertake a visit to Capital Hill for that specific purpose.

C. PRIOR SECRETARIES OF THE NAVY

Although a thorough evaluation and examination of the tenures of the 65 Secretaries to hold the office prior to Webb is beyond the scope of this study, the legacies bequeathed by three in particular are worth considering. Their historical precedent demonstrates not only the inherent responsibility the Secretary has to act for the good of the service, but also the unwritten, less well-defined liberty each Secretary took to keep the Navy Department a modern, forward-thinking entity within the structure of the national security apparatus. Not coincidentally, each of the Secretaries identified below proposed initiatives that, though largely based on tangible hardware acquisition, were

fundamentally geared toward a visionary application of naval assets and resources in defense of United States' interests.

1. George Bancroft

Secretary Bancroft entered the office of Secretary of the Navy in the administration of President John Tyler in 1845. Assuming his duties prior to the hostilities of the war with Mexico, Bancroft inherited a Navy that, though far ranging, had not been engaged in any sort of real combat since the British war in 1812. Nonetheless, Bancroft left a lasting impression on the United States Navy. Commensurate with the direction given him by the President to improve the manner of education in the fleet, he set to work. (Coletta, 1980)

Bancroft's ingenuity and ability to operate within government bureaucracy became readily apparent. Congress generally disliked the idea of an academy for the naval service. Congress believed that formal instruction was not important for the naval officer corps. It also believed the United States was isolated from the risk of war, and a trained officer corps enhanced the influence of the executive branch. Additionally, many members had contempt for the sponsorship of officers associated with cadets matriculating at West Point. Therefore, Bancroft went about establishing the school without having to go to Congress for funding. Instead, his plan was to inaugurate the program of instruction, assure its viability, and then turn to Congress for sustainment funding. (Coletta, 1980)

He consulted midshipmen on the verge of commissioning as well as serving officers to gain insight into the feasibility and importance of establishing a school of formal naval instruction. The response was very positive and, utilizing two provisions of his duties under law, Bancroft detailed naval instructors to the site of old Fort Severn on the Chesapeake Bay, which he acquired with the consent of the Secretary of War, to teach the first class of land-going midshipmen. Bancroft instructed his administrators to prepare the students for the necessities of being a naval officer. The curriculum consisted of topics ranging from morals and astronomy to steam and gunnery. (Coletta, 1980) The same mandate to prepare students for that which is required of a naval officer is still valid 150 years after the school's inception.

2. Benjamin F. Tracy

Benjamin Tracy became the 32nd Secretary of the Navy when he was appointed to that position by President Benjamin Harrison in 1889. Tracy's tenure marked a turning point in the way the United States Navy served the nation. Coincident with the writings of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, Tracy's tenure as the Navy Secretary marked a departure from the isolationist attitude that pervaded the office prior to his arrival. (Coletta, 1980)

Though in the long run Tracy's efforts were only moderately successful, he was the first sea service secretary to advocate the use of the Navy as the nation's first line of defense around the globe. To support his beliefs, Tracy planned, with the help of Mahan and other naval thinkers, the kind of force that would be required to exercise American

muscle overseas. Their labor bore fruit with the Navy's first true armored battleships whose worth Tracy sold to Congress by arguing that the cost of these ships would be cheaper, in the long run, than repelling invaders from America's shores. (Coletta, 1980)

Furthermore, Tracy changed the way in which Navy officers continued their education by invigorating the Naval War College with minds like Mahan and Stephen Luce in order to further the critical strategic thinking necessitated by his policy of U.S. Navy engagement around the world. His ability to look into the future and identify the direction the service should move, and then support that move with internal improvements and enhancements, marked Benjamin Tracy's tenure as one of ingenuity and forethought. His initiatives paved the way for the emergence of the American Navy in the early twentieth century. (Coletta, 1980)

3. John L. Sullivan

Secretary Sullivan served from 1947 until 1949 in the administration of President Harry Truman. Holding the Navy Secretary's position in the wake of the Second World War and the National Security Act of 1947, Sullivan's tenure was marked by a time of decreasing defense budgets and the first inklings of mandatory unity amongst the services. Overseen by Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, the services debated and competed for a share of the defense budget. With regard to the role of air power, a particularly intense argument arose between the Navy and Air Force. Given the success of air delivered atomic weapons in bringing the Pacific theater of war to a close two years prior, the newly formed Air Force viewed the strategic mission as solely theirs. This

would mandate that they be considered the nation's first line of defense and logically receive a larger share of funds. Conversely, the Navy admirals who witnessed the success of carrier aviation in the Atlantic and Pacific campaigns were willing to concede the bulk of the strategic bombing mission to the Air Force, but not the title of the nation's first line of defense. (Coletta, 1980)

As these arguments continued over several months, and while Forrestal attempted to bring unity of purpose to the Defense Department, the Air Force and the Navy received funding for new weapons systems. The Air Force planned to build a new generation of strategic bombers with the B-36 design. Sullivan, on the other hand, ceased construction on a number of other vessels in order to shift funding to a new class of supercarrier to be named *United States*. Although construction of the ship moved forward with the laying of the vessel's keel, the new Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, who replaced Forrestal, shortly thereafter ordered discontinuation of construction without consulting Sullivan or his admirals. Not surprisingly, Sullivan felt slighted at the lack of consultation and, due to a several day delay between delivering his resignation to the President and then to Johnson, he was politically outmaneuvered and made to look as though he condoned Johnson's actions. In truth, Johnson's order infuriated the Secretary of the Navy and led him to believe he could no longer usefully serve the department. Sullivan's resignation, though not enough to revive the building program of the supercarrier, was accompanied by a 'revolt of the admirals' in which high ranking Navy officers left the service en masse

to protest what they considered to be the shoddy and parochial treatment of their service by the Secretary of Defense. (Coletta, 1980)

Though the impact of such actions was not immediately evident, the message it sent was that no service is ultimately more important than another, and each service, though unique, has a responsibility to assist in the larger team concept of national defense. While Sullivan's action had no legal or historical precedent in the office, its subtle demand to recognize and use the assets of the defense team in unison to achieve the most efficient and quick victory was a precursor of the legislation signed into law known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act nearly 40 years later.

4. Review of the Secretaries

While the mandates of Title 10 illustrated above broadly define the obligations of the Secretary of the Navy, they only generally address the possibility of the Secretary inaugurating paradigm shifts in the way he can undertake cultural and intellectual changes in the service. Just as the root cause behind Webb's resignation lay in his fundamentally held beliefs about how the Navy should be structured and what role it should take in acting in concert with the other services, so too did the Secretaries identified above reevaluate the status quo or the preponderance of public sentiment to cause a redirection in the focus of the naval services. Their contributions, while possibly radical or out the norm at the time of inception, proved to be beneficial to the evolution of the entire Navy and its role in defending national interests.

D. CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

An understanding of the broader context in which James Webb's resignation took place is important to explaining it. Several international and domestic events were contributing factors to the resignation. His perception of how the Navy fit into the world, though changing, was fundamental. In his view the Navy's rightful place was on the open ocean safeguarding international lines of communication and the American interests orbiting around them.

The latter half of the decade of the 1980's was a dramatic one in the history of the world. The globe's two most powerful nations, the United States and the Soviet Union, continued a Cold War into its fourth decade. Instead of fighting each other and risking the possibility of a nuclear exchange, the two nations funded and armed smaller nations in Central America, Asia, and Africa fighting conventional wars for the ideological interests of their superpower sponsors. Though outwardly still an enemy of the U.S., changes in the Soviet Union began to precipitate an improved relationship with the U.S.

In the United States, the economic recovery from the 1970's was in full swing. By 1985 the real gross national product reached its highest growth rate in nearly 35 years and by 1987 unemployment dipped to one of its lowest points in a decade (Reston, 1987; Meltzer, 1995). This prosperity, though, came at a price. The international trade deficit and budget deficit of the United States skyrocketed and the administration of President Ronald Reagan was put under pressure to control spending. The result of pressure to decrease the budget deficit was enactment of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Amendment

signed at the end of 1985 ordering that the federal budget be balanced by the 1991 fiscal year (East, 1986).

1. International Affairs¹

Clearly the meeting points of American foreign policy and security concerns in the 1980's intersected with the Soviet Union and its ambitions, real or perceived, to spread communism throughout the world. With the death of Soviet Premiere Konstantin Chernenko in March 1985, the Soviet Communist Party installed in his place Mikhail Gorbachev (Meltzer, 1995). Relations between the superpowers, soured from the Soviet intrusion into Afghanistan in 1979, began to slowly warm (Kegley, 1991). Gorbachev's overt gestures toward the West began a month after his succession to power. Within six months, Gorbachev stopped deployment of intermediate range nuclear missiles to Western Europe while asking the United States to do the same, and he recommended a ban on all nuclear weapons by the turn of the century. That relations between the two countries were headed in a positive direction was evident in November of 1985 when Reagan and Gorbachev held a three-day summit in Geneva to discuss relations between their nations as well as arms control issues. (Meltzer, 1995; Kegley, 1991)

1986 brought many of the same overtures as the previous year. Though the United States was increasingly involved in Central America and the Middle East, relations with the Soviet Union remained positive. The Soviet foreign minister traveled

¹ Though an important aspect of his tenure, for purposes of investigating Webb's resignation, this author has omitted the specific events transpiring in the Persian Gulf concerning the U.S. Navy in this section. These events are addressed below in relating the experiences of Webb's tenure as Secretary of the Navy.

to Great Britain ostensibly in an attempt to engage Western Europe as a sign of goodwill, and NATO representatives agreed to discuss the reduction of conventional forces as well as strategic nuclear weapons deployed on the continent by the superpowers. A hiccup in foreign relations came in Reykjavik, Iceland, where Reagan and Gorbachev met for a conference with each other to discuss the nuclear arms race and a potential eradication of all nuclear weapons (Kegley, 1991). After President Reagan refused to bargain on the Strategic Defense Initiative program, the talks between the two leaders reached a stalemate. Despite the incident in Reykjavik, earlier in the year President Reagan reciprocated Gorbachev's gestures toward the limitation of nuclear weapons by affirming the United States' intention to abide by the still-unratified SALT II treaty as well as disassembling two ballistic missile submarines. (Meltzer, 1995)

The following year, prior to James Webb assuming the head post of the Department of the Navy, more dynamic initiatives were implemented in the Soviet Union. In January 1987, Gorbachev shocked the world by suggesting the Soviet Union institute reforms along the lines of "democratization." Shortly after, the Soviet government announced the release of the largest number of political dissidents in more than 30 years. Even these events, though, were seemingly overshadowed by the events of March and April. In two months the Soviet Premiere suggested that the superpowers eliminate medium-range nuclear weapons from Europe and then followed that statement by offering to withdraw shorter-range intermediate nuclear weapons from the continent. (Meltzer, 1995)

The events identified above, while admittedly not all-encompassing, demonstrate that the strides made to improve relations between East and West in the middle years of the 1980's originated with the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev. Though the years of détente in the 1970's produced more cordial familiarity between the superpowers, the Gorbachev reforms were unprecedented to date in the Cold War. Additionally, the United States, engaged diplomatically and militarily by proxy elsewhere around the globe, had a vested interest in the changing of Soviet leadership.

Through the years of confrontation, competitive coexistence, and détente, American foreign policy was anchored on besting the Soviet Union and its allies (Kegley, 1991). A world map readily identifies the geographic areas where American and Soviet interests intersected. In the Pacific, Japan, one of the staunchest American allies, lay only a stone's throw from the massive Soviet Pacific Fleet based at Vladivostock. Further south, the Soviet naval base at Cam Rahn Bay, Viet Nam, paralleled the American presence in the Philippines. In the Persian Gulf, oil supplier to the United States and its allies, Soviet weapons and military advisors were visible. Additionally, the Soviet border lay just north of one of the largest Gulf states, Iran. The insurgency in Angola threatened the containment of Communist designs on an African continent where Libya existed as a willing ally of the Soviets. To the north lay Western Europe. Already the scene of two world wars in the twentieth century, in the 1980's it lay as a medium between opposing conventional and nuclear forces poised to strike and defend in the name of competing ideologies. Any land war fought on the European continent required secure logistical

lines across the ocean and the neutralization of the Soviet naval menace to assure success in such a venture.

Common to each of the areas cited is its proximity to, not only an American interest, but more importantly a warm water port. The Soviet Navy, operating solely from native waters, could not operate year-round from many of its ports without contending with frozen harbors and channels. To further complicate the Soviet position, its Black Sea and Baltic Fleets were historically and continuously in danger of being bottled into their home ports by allied naval blockades utilizing the geographic chokepoints that limited access to these waters.

2. Fiscal Concerns

Central to any investigation of the Webb resignation from the Secretary of the Navy's job is the issue of cuts in the defense budget at the end of 1987 and into early 1988. To understand how the decrease in defense expenditures became a necessity, one must look to 1985 and the introduction of a bill requiring the administration to balance the federal budget.

Though the Reagan administration's first term was successful in invigorating the stagnant U.S. economy inherited from the Carter years, spending during those years expanded an already bloated deficit. Consequently, by December 1985, President Reagan signed into law the Gramm-Rudman Act which required that the federal budget be balanced by fiscal year 1991 (Meltzer, 1995). The Act required the federal deficit to decrease from \$171.9 billion in 1986, to \$144 billion in 1987, to a \$36 billion per year

decrease from the 1987 amount thereafter until 1991. (East, 1986) Ideally, at the end of this cycle of deficit ceiling reductions, the fiscal year 1991 budget would balance.

In an attempt to immediately generate results from the Gramm-Rudman legislation, the President, in February 1986, suggested that federal spending be curbed by defunding a series of domestic programs and privatizing many agencies of the federal government. Just two months later the Senate, then under Republican control, renounced the proposal and the administration was forced to reexamine ways to curb deficit spending. (Meltzer, 1995)

By the time James Webb was preparing to assume office in the Navy Department in April 1987, fiscal concerns were still a major priority for the administration. Despite outgoing-Secretary of the Navy John Lehman's insistence that funding of Navy shipbuilding programs be maintained, it appeared that the Department of Defense budget would decrease. In congressional action from as early as May 7, 1987, the Democratically-controlled Congress passed legislation that would decrease, to a lesser extent than proposed by the President, funding for domestic programs while raising taxes to help pay off the deficit. Similarly, the Congress opted to decrease military spending by an average of \$16 billion and appropriations by over \$23 billion beyond that requested by the White House in order to further reduce the deficit. (Fuerbringer, 1987) The signs were clearly evident that the Congress intended to scale back the \$2 trillion rearmament package bestowed upon the military in President Reagan's first term (Wilson, March 16, 1987).

As 1987 wore on, the effect of Gramm-Rudman and the fiscal discipline it mandated became clearer. The argument between Capitol Hill and the White House dragged on through the year as both sides submitted proposals with no consensus. Not until November 1987, Webb having been Secretary of the Navy for seven months already, was the military portion of the fiscal year 1988 budget agreed upon and passed on to the Pentagon. This budget agreement was not the critical factor influencing Webb's resignation as Secretary of the Navy. However, it was clear that defense spending was waning as fiscal year 1988 heralded the third straight year that defense spending lagged behind inflation. Defense spending that burgeoned during the first Reagan administration dipped below \$300 billion. (Cushman, November 8, 1987)

E. SUMMARY

The three distinct divisions addressed above lay the groundwork for a fuller explanation of James Webb's resignation. Title 10 mandates illustrate the confines of the law within which any Secretary must operate. Tying those legal requirements into practical examination of three 'real-world' scenarios gives the reader a flavor for the influence that intuitive and conscientious thinkers can have on the course the Navy Department has charted while remaining within their legal obligations. Finally, the previous division has discussed the contemporary events related to the Department of the Navy's role in world affairs when James Webb assumed the helm as the 66th Secretary of the Navy.

III. A LIFE OF SERVICE²

A. WEBB'S DEVELOPMENT

1. Early Years

One of the first of the baby-boomer generation, James Webb was born in 1946 following his father's return to the United States at the end of the Second World War. Both of his parents descended from Scottish-Irish roots. Remarkably, Webb's ancestors or relatives served in every major war the United States has fought, from the Revolution to the Persian Gulf, with the exception of the First World War. (About, 1999)

As the son of a career Air Force officer, Webb spent the early years of his life living at bases around the world (United States Senate, 1984). His childhood was the start of an affiliation with the United States military that lasted beyond his time in the post of Secretary of the Navy. Growing up in a military family left a lasting impression on the young Webb. It influenced how he thought about and considered the nature of his father's occupation. Webb said:

...Cal Ripkin grew up with a dad that was a baseball player, and he's eight years old and he's working out with major leaguers. I grew up in the military. When I was a kid I'd be at a lot of these isolated military bases, and what have you got to do? What do you sit down and talk to your dad about at night? How does this system work? That's the way I spent my entire young life, really, was thinking and studying about these issues...The way that I looked at all of those issues [later on] was directly related to things that started when I was two and a half years old and my

² Due to the specific topic addressed in this study, the author has consciously omitted portions of Webb's life history that did not seem to contribute to the events that brought about his resignation from the post of Secretary of the Navy.

dad was in the Berlin Airlift. I've spent my entire life thinking about this stuff. (Interview, February, 11, 1999)

2. A Promising Career

By 1963, with his father involved in the Air Force's early missile programs in a career that eventually launched him into the Pentagon during the Viet Nam War, the younger Webb accepted a Naval ROTC scholarship to the University of Southern California and began his own military career. The stint in California lasted only a year before Webb was accepted into the United States Naval Academy in 1964. He graduated four years later with the class of 1968 as a second lieutenant of Marines. After initial schooling at the Marine Officer Basic School, he was sent to the Republic of South Viet Nam where he led a rifle platoon, and later commanded a company, in 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. He returned to the United States after his combat tour holding, in addition to two Purple Hearts and several awards for gallantry, the nation's second highest award for valor in action, the Navy Cross. (About, 1999)

Initially assigned to instruct at the Marine Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia, Webb eventually was transferred to the Pentagon in mid-1971 where he ran a section that handled Marine Corps-related queries and complaints from Congress and the public (Timberg, 1995). It was here, on the staff of the Secretary of the Navy, that Webb first got a glimpse of the other side of the military—the side controlled by civilians. Admitting his ignorance, Webb said, "I

didn't have a whole lot of understanding about what the civilian side of the military did while I was a kid or even the time I was in the Marine Corps." It wasn't "until that year, when I was on the Secretary of the Navy's staff...[that] I had some understanding..." (Interview, January 19, 1999) Although his position in the Secretary's office did not require his critical thought on matters of international importance, he did use this time to write his first published work.

The article, written for the *Marine Corps Gazette*, was a critical look at the conceptual role of the Marine Corps, as articulated in the National Security Act of 1947 and the Key West Agreements, versus the actual expectations of the service based on historical and contemporary application. Its genesis was the result of observation. While working on the staff of the Secretary in the Pentagon, Webb said he saw very few Marines in the policy or decision-making process. He questioned why such a void existed (Interview, June 3, 1998).

What he found, and then wrote about, was the exclusion of any Marine Corps representation during critical plans formulating roles and missions for the services. This exclusion ranged from the inception of the National Security Act to the token presence of only four Marine generals dispersed throughout all of the Defense Department's joint staffs (Webb, 1972). Furthermore, he argued that the lack of Marine Corps representation (at the time of his article's publication the Commandant of the Marine Corps was not a full member of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff) in defining the service's mission led to narrow-sighted assumptions and unnecessary redundancy.

Specifically the admirals, because they represented the Marine Corps at Key West in the same way the Chief of Naval Operations represented naval aviation, drew on their experiences of the recently ended Second World War. The Marine Corps' primary responsibility was to be an amphibious force (Reef Points). Though not a primary responsibility, the Army was similarly tasked with preparing itself for amphibious operations. Webb wrote that such redundancy could easily place the Marine Corps in a position where, not unlike other times in its existence, it might be fighting for its life and legitimacy (Webb, 1972). Citing the historical record, Webb argued that the Marine Corps' unique mandate, that of being used as the President may so direct, was the one consistency in its use throughout American history. He noted that "The Marine Corps, then, has a very definite and important role in the carrying out of American foreign policy. It is the institution which is at the President's fingertips, designed from the beginning to answer his immediate call for service anywhere" (Webb, 1972).

Webb also discussed the criticality of the Marine Corps' readiness in responding to crises as the key to operational focus, not solely preparation for amphibious operations. He maintained that preparation of amphibious doctrine was merely a means to achieving the end goal of readiness, and that the conflicts he predicted in the immediate future, conflicts which fell far short of protracted

war between superpowers, would be ideally suited for the Marine Corps. He concluded this article with several recommendations. Two of the points dealt with extending the Corps' influence and achieving greater autonomy. He proposed to do this by widening the roles of the service in order to make full use of both the Navy and the Air Force's ability to deploy combat ready Marines. By taking advantage of each service's capabilities and the flexibility such options permitted, Webb believed the Marine Corps would be able to weigh in more heavily on matters of planning and decision making at higher levels of command. Additionally, he advised that a written document identifying the Marine Corps' readiness mission would clarify to the civilians responsible for the military the particular aspect of training that singled out the Marine Corps for its unique role. Finally, he recommended a rethinking of the original roles and missions assigned in the late 1940's citing the infrequency of the Marine Corps executing its primary mission by law (amphibious warfare), compared to the myriad assignments it undertook under the auspices of what "the President may direct." (Webb, 1972)

Webb admitted that this article caused some consternation. The *Marine Corps Gazette* initially refused to print the article due to references to Defense Secretary McNamara's misunderstanding of forces in readiness and other remarks in the article that were viewed as disparaging toward the Army. However, the relevancy of the article can be seen in hindsight. In 1978, the first item the Marine Corps' legislative representative to Congress received from Headquarters

Marine Corps to prepare his argument to that body on the issue of a rapid deployment force was this 1972 article. (Interview, June 3, 1998) The Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1995 to 1999, General Charles Krulak, espoused the same arguments incorporated in the Webb article on roles and missions. Although internal to the Department of the Navy, the "Forward...From the Sea" doctrine receives much attention. Outside the Department, the Marine Corps is portrayed as "America's 9-1-1 force," "America's Force in Readiness," and the service that will be the most ready when the nation is least ready. While this author is not suggesting that Webb had a monopoly on this information or attitude in the 1970's (a fact Webb readily admits), his insistence on carefully spelling out his argument and defending his beliefs foreshadows the type of writer, thinker, and government official he became.

More writing followed, with contributions on tactics and military law in a variety of professional journals (Webb, 1974). One of the articles he wrote, a piece describing the feasibility of using Guam as an alternative staging point for U.S. forces in the Pacific should the Philippines become unavailable, caught the attention of a Guamanian newspaper. The detail and information included in the article had many convinced that it, despite being the sole work of Webb, was a ploy by the Pentagon to test the plausibility of such a venture (Timberg, 1995). Webb's continued contributions to professionally oriented periodicals, particularly as a junior captain, reinforces the notion that his childhood,

adolescence, and early adulthood were spent in contemplation of militarily related subjects.

3. Changing Plans

In 1972, James Webb was forced to accept a medical retirement from the Marine Corps due to wounds incurred during his combat tour in Viet Nam. That fall he began studying law at Georgetown University. The article on Guam, though, spurred him to take a closer look at the region, and in the summer of 1973 he visited the Mariana Islands. In addition to canvassing the World War Two battlefields of the island chain, Webb met with Guamanian officials who took an interest in the concepts he wrote about in the article. Leaving Guam that summer he returned to the United States to another year of law school. He simultaneously wrote a book, published in 1974, expanding on the information he gathered the previous year in the Pacific. (Timberg, 1995)

The book, entitled *Micronesia and U.S. Pacific Strategy: A Blueprint for the 1980's*, was a proposal of sorts. First, Webb identified where and why the United States was engaged in certain areas of the Pacific region. He also identified the trapezium formed by the prominent players in the region: the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, and the People's Republic of China. As part of a discussion of events occurring in the region, Webb accurately predicted further U.S. troop withdrawals from bases in the western Pacific. Predicting increased Japanese rearmament, Webb said that the possibility of a Communist-controlled

Korean peninsula and a Japanese citizenry discontent with foreign military presence might fuel such rearmament. Furthermore, tying the two preceding points together was his consideration of transferring the bulk of United States forces in the Pacific to a strategically interior position like the Marianas.

Benefiting from his visits with Guamanian dignitaries, he outlined the political, economic, social, and geographical factors at play in the island chain. He went on to dissect the force structure requirements needed to confront contingencies in the region while still maintaining the shield of nuclear protection over U.S. allies and deterring the Soviets per the Nixon Doctrine.

The work demonstrates Webb's ability to analyze a situation and consider the myriad factors playing into the rather broad geographic arena at issue. He drew logical assumptions from the information and made predictions based on his knowledge of history and understanding of the political and military realities of the day. Although the way South Viet Nam succumbed to the communists in 1975 made a few of his assumptions unfeasible, before this event Webb submitted to the Guamanian government the results of his research on the island's facilities requirements. His research bore out what he predicted in his book—that Guam was a realistic position from which U.S. forces could stage for operations in the Pacific Ocean. Furthermore, his thought processes and rationalization for policy advice were harbingers of the sort of critical thinking and problem solving he demonstrated years later in government service.

4. Writer's Passion and Legal Counsel

After three years at Georgetown, Webb graduated with a degree in law in 1975. In addition to his studies, Webb employed his education to defend, *pro bono*, a young Marine who was involved in an incident in South Viet Nam wherein several civilians were allegedly killed by a Marine infantry patrol. Over a six year involvement with the case, Webb was finally able to clear the name of the Marine in question although, tragically, the exoneration came in 1978, three years after the young man took his own life. Writing about the case while at Georgetown, Webb wrote a piece entitled "The Sad Conviction of Sam Green: The Case for the Reasonable and Honest War Criminal." In it, he outlined the particulars of the case and argued in defense of the Marine in question. The merit of his writing was recognized with the school's highest award for excellence in legal writing while Webb was still in his first year of law school. (Timberg, 1995; About, 1999) Once again, his ability to convey his thoughts and the rationale for his beliefs through the written word was recognized, and it forced others to consider the gravity of what he wrote.

Before graduating Webb also began another undertaking. He began writing his first novel, *Fields of Fire*, which was eventually released in 1978. His passionate and intimate ability to tell the story of a Marine rifle platoon fighting the war in South Viet Nam consumed his thoughts after graduation to the point that he did not take his bar exam for the District of Columbia until 1977. (Timberg, 1995) The novel was a success

and it was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize the year it was published (United States Senate, 1984).

This period also witnessed Webb's next foray into federal service. In 1977 he accepted a position as assistant minority counsel to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (United States Senate, 1984). In addition to working in government for the first time as a civilian, he learned how to develop and manage legislation as well as monitor the oversight, budget, and special studies relating to his committee. He occupied that position until the end of 1978 when, based on the success of Fields of Fire, he took a position at the Naval Academy in the spring semester of 1979 in the English Department as the school's writer-in-residence (Timberg, 1995).

Following his stint at the academy that semester, he returned to Capitol Hill as the full minority counsel to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (United States Senate, 1984; About, 1999). It was in this capacity that Webb refined his competency in governmental procedure. Many of the comments made years later, in the wake of his resignation, accused him of having a personality incompatible or not suited for government work. However, based on his longevity on the committee--four years total--it seems unlikely that such a claim of intemperance is based on any solid fact. In addition to liaising with multiple departments within the executive branch, including Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and the Veteran's Administration, he also counseled an average of 60 hearings a year in support of approximately 20 bills before the Congress (United States Senate, 1984; Interview, February 11, 1999).

Webb believed that his experiences on Capitol Hill were "an incredible lesson in all the parliamentary procedures of Congress." Furthermore, reflecting on his time on the Veterans' Affairs Committee he thought that he "understood how Congress worked in a way that a lot of people in the Department of Defense did not understand...particularly uniformed people, but also other people." He continued by saying, "I think I had a really good sense from my experiences when you could stand up to Congress and when you couldn't." (Interview, February 11, 1999)

Leaving the Veterans' Affairs Committee in 1981 he went back to writing and journalism. It was during this period, prior to entering the Defense Department in 1984, that he wrote two more militarily-related novels, A Country Such As This and A Sense of Honor, and won an Emmy award for his coverage of a Marine rifle company on peacekeeping duty in war-torn Beirut in 1983. Besides these endeavors, he also wrote and spoke on issues of veterans' concerns, politics, the Viet Nam War, military manpower, U.S. alliances, and operations in Grenada and Lebanon. (United States Senate, 1984)

B. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1. Defining A New Post

After spending the previous 10 years studying, writing, working in the Congress, and reporting, in 1984, through a friend who was working within the Reagan administration, James Webb was offered the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. The creation of this office was the culmination of measures taken by

the Congress to establish such a position. After being nominated as the inaugural holder of the post, Webb sat before the Senate Armed Service Committee on April 25, 1984, for confirmation. (United States Senate, 1984)

The dialogue during the confirmation process further illuminates those intellectual characteristics Webb first demonstrated through his writing in 1972. In his opening statement, in addition to discussing his self-imposed requirement to insure the reserve forces of the nation be well equipped and led, he added that he would seek to insure that they were employed in "a strategy that makes proper and efficient use of their services" (United States Senate, 1984). The passage seems to indicate that he was considering the issue of the Reserve and the National Guard in its broader context beyond what might be in the interests of various political lobbying groups looking to court the post for their own particular interests. That point is important to consider when one learns that those in the Congress for whom Reserve and Guard affairs were a political rallying point registered their opposition because one of their own was not nominated for the position (Interview, June 3, 1998).

Almost fifteen years after first taking office, Webb discussed the reasons he entered government service on the civilian side. In light of the extensive writing he had done on military manpower and leadership, he viewed the chance to enter the Reagan administration as a diversion from strictly writing and reporting. While not specifically calling his motivation to serve the administration a sense of duty, Webb, always thinking broadly, felt that with the presence of a substantial threat (in this case, the Soviet Union)

that "I had the training and had spent all the time, and I should remain involved with these issues and the historical importance of them should be brought to the attention of others" (Interview, June 3, 1998). Although this quotation may ring with a certain air of self-importance, considering the background of the speaker and the activities and documentation associated with his professional career to this point in his life, it is easier to see that he considered his ability to bring well thought-out perspectives to the process an asset.

Webb continued, more succinctly, "My motivations for coming into government were a little different because I knew I wasn't going to try to use that as a piece to build a political career or as a part of a rather standard legal career ...my thought was to come in for a year and a half...I wasn't thinking about normal career patterns..." (Interview, June 3, 1998).

The benefit of being the first occupant of a new office is that precedent is set every day. In the case of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Webb was very forthcoming in his views toward the position. He pointed out that, "Nobody knew what this job was going to do. I could have done nothing and nobody would have known the difference." In an effort to lend credibility and legitimacy to this new office Webb set to work, looking for a way to contribute. What he found was:

...there was no office that focused on how to go from a peacetime to wartime military...There was thought, but in terms of creating the overview, it really hadn't been done. The operational side was there, but would we have the people to do it? So many of the JCS exercises in that era were started at M+60. We're 60 days into it, we got our people and we're going to go...There were operational analyses, JCS was doing that,

but in terms of resources, manpower flow, etcetera, there wasn't the intricate analyses in terms of how to do that. The first 120 days of war—how do you get there? How do you get there in terms of changing the whole manpower base, the training base? Where are medical resources going to go in what I called a "stop-start war?" What happens to strategic airlift when it's got multiple functions? At that time we were holding 18 divisions in the Army. Many of these divisions, contrary to other eras, were stovepiped right into the National Guard and Reserve for combat support and combat service support missions. There was a lot of intricate thought that needed to be done. So I decided to take that and really work on it. (Interview, June 3, 1998)

Thus, at least with regard to the first Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, one of Webb's primary responsibilities became to insure the efficient and effective mobilization and integration of the nation's reserves into a wartime posture in the event of war. Webb also commented that in planning mobilization strategies he did not envision a situation similar to the one in the Second World War where conflict seemed likely a number of years in advance. Instead, his planning was based around a Korean War-type scenario in which the country was at peace one day and at war the next.

The uniqueness of the Reserve Affairs position gave Webb intimate insight into every service within the Department of Defense. His recognition of the need for thorough planning in integrating the reserve and regular forces in a national emergency caused him to look more closely at several other aspects of mobilization and the logistics of war. One of these areas involved determining at what points in the mobilization process the system was likely to falter or collapse. These "breaking points," to use Webb's words, were vital to understanding and

guaranteeing mobilization, but, not surprisingly, operational concerns typically were of first priority to the active duty units doing planning.

In light of this important, yet relatively untouched subject, Webb's new office could concentrate on this aspect of supporting the war machine and take that burden off of the regular forces by providing "a centerpoint where all this could be coordinated in a larger way." (Interview, June 15, 1998) Furthermore, Webb contends, because the mobilization issue was brought into the Joint Chiefs of Staff war gaming scenarios in a cooperative rather than confrontational way, the staff was willing to concede that this was an area that needed to be considered. The result was that scenarios ceased to begin two or four weeks into the "war," but were instead run from day one with call-up, mobilization, and logistical implications of such an act all played into the scenario. (Interview February 11, 1999)

Paralleling the office's work integrating the National Guard and Reserve forces into the regular components was another critical manpower issue. Because the Korean War-type scenario Webb was considering, where the country goes to war with little or no warning, would make it impossible to quickly train large, new pools of servicemen, he looked to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). The IRR is a dynamic body of personnel who, although no longer employed by the Department of Defense as military members, are still considered available for reactivation in case of a crisis within a certain time period (usually a few years)

after separation from the service. Ideally, each service keeps tabs on these IRR members as far as their points of contact are concerned. In an effort to ascertain just how reliable or realistic such a call-up of the IRR might be, Webb's office received funding to conduct an exercise of the call-up procedures. He admitted that although the exercise was contested by some and certainly unpopular with many, the information gathered, with respect to accuracy of recall lists and percentages of those recalled that were capable of serving, was valuable for manpower planning processes.

Another issue tightly coupled with fighting the first few weeks of a war and the readiness of the units that are required to fight it is military medicine. Again, with an eye toward the concept of a "stop-start war," Webb's staff began to examine the capability of the military medical community. Webb and his staff looked at issues like bed capacity, evacuation priorities, casualty estimates from the "war games," and historical statistics based on past trends in providing medical care to combatants over the course of a conflict. What he found was that, in the Korean War for instance, the immediacy of the conflict affected the care given to soldiers. A greater number of soldiers died in the earlier months of the war, compared to those who were wounded, than any other time since the American Civil War. The point is that unpreparedness not only affects combat units, but also those units that support the war fighters. (Interview, June 15, 1998)

The position of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs was one created to ensure the military reserves of the United States would be able to successfully and competently assimilate with regular units when called on to do so. Bearing in mind the state of world affairs when this position was authorized in the early 1980's, its purpose is perhaps clarified a bit considering the number of troops needed to counter a Soviet offensive into, say, Western Europe.

For Webb's part, the issues he dealt with in this role as an Assistant Secretary were characteristic when viewed against his adult life's activities. While the specific topics he dealt with may have been new, their contribution to the larger sphere of national security and military effectiveness were in keeping with the sorts of issues on which he spent his life writing and thinking.

2. A Memorandum

Concurrent to the important issues being pursued in the arena of mobilization and assimilation of the reserve forces, Webb contributed on another issue. In 1984 Assistant Secretary Webb, at the behest of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Fred Ikle, wrote a 14-page memorandum outlining his thoughts on the future use of the Reserve and Guard forces. The advent of this request from Ikle was a discussion with Webb about the latter's visits to Europe to observe operations of the NATO allies. Webb traveled to allied nations in order to learn, first-hand, about their military capabilities. Particularly with the NATO nations, Webb was concerned with the way the Europeans handled manpower, logistics, and funding of their reserve forces. He said that he learned from

these visits that the NATO allies were indeed a competent force. (Interview, November 5, 1998) These visits continued throughout his tenure in the Assistant Secretary's post, but it was after his return from Europe in the latter part of 1984 that he wrote the memorandum to Ikle.

The memorandum (Appendix A) began with Webb's recommendation for guiding the military's role in defending national interests. He laid these out as caveats indicating that for too long reserve, and for that matter all, military functions had been dictated less by their importance to the overall strategic imperative and more by "end strength decisions and other pressures to find solutions." In order to rearrange this manner of orchestrating and formulating the force mix, the national security apparatus needed to clarify the military's responsibilities in the arena of deterrence (which relies on the regular forces) and wartime footing (which is reliant on reserve augmentation). He conceded that to alter the current force structure would meet with great opposition from the services affected and from allies who relied on the United States to act in their defense. Finally, preceding the Gorbachev reforms by a number of years, Webb noted that such changes should take place coincidentally with mutual realignments so as not to send the wrong signal to potential enemies and to demonstrate to the world the United States' assertion of nonaggressiveness. (Webb, 1984)

In concluding his caveats, Webb discussed the type of reordering of force structure he envisioned. He advocated a smaller active Army and Air Force with increased emphasis on each services' reserve components. These active force reductions

would be the result of a draw down of forces stationed in NATO countries. (Webb, 1984)

This was a position advocated as far back as 1963 when former-President Eisenhower wrote that the time had come to withdraw a portion of American troops from Europe and insist that the NATO allies assume a greater share of the defensive burden of Western Europe (Eisenhower, 1963).

The Marine Corps, Webb said, should stay at about its current strength with more attention paid to the missions of the Marine Reserve. The Navy, though, he believed should grow both its active and reserve forces. This growth was required based on the geographic reality of the United States as a maritime nation. He saw increased national interests in the Pacific region and an inability to exert naval dominance everywhere else around the globe. He closed this part of the paper by affirming that a stronger naval capability would allow for more flexible crisis response, a reduction in manpower requirements and its associated costs (e.g., the logistical support of service members and their dependents stationed overseas), while still contributing to NATO's ability to fight and win in Europe. (Webb, 1984)

Obviously the subject matter included in this, his opening three pages, was rife for debate. Throughout the rest of the proposal he laid out discussion points analyzing certain historical, economic, political, and military facts to make his case. His discussion points ranged from adjusting the U.S. presence on NATO soil without sacrificing defensive capability, to putting greater reliance on the ability of the reserve forces to respond as an effective "follow-on force" to bolster NATO's strength, to facing the

economic and political reality that U.S. interests were shifting to the Pacific and force structure should shift accordingly to complement it (Webb, 1984).

Webb spent the body of the memorandum outlining his argument for implementing his plan. Toward the end though, he conceded the reality involved in undertaking such a program. Namely, the interservice competition for Defense Department resources and the conflict such a proposal would be likely to spark mandated that any such realignment or reform would have to be directed from outside the department (Webb, 1984).

Elaborating on this paper nearly 15 years later Webb continued his thoughts on the matter by pointing out that, when one considers the 18 division-size of the Army at the time, it is easier to see why the Army and Air Force wanted to maintain that force in Europe. "It was a historical anomaly for the United States to have large numbers of troops in a fixed position as a local or regional defense outside of the U.S. It had only been true since the end of World War II... We actually had 50,000 more troops in NATO in 1984 than we had at the end of the Viet Nam War. Instead of a steady withdrawal, they were using NATO in many cases as a holding tank for force structure" (Interview, June 15, 1998). Commenting on the state of the Pacific region he pointed out,

...my view, particularly at that time, was that the Pacific was evolving so quickly as an economic force, the balance of trade was shifting over there, so many of our security interests were more vulnerable there than anywhere... State Department careers were being made on Europe, and so all this attention was being paid to the minutia of Europe. A tremendous amount of American military assets were dedicated to the richest portion of the world where they could protect themselves. The turbulence,

military and otherwise, was taking place in Asia and to a certain extent still is (Interview January 19, 1999).

This memorandum, though written in 1984, came back to play a role in Webb's life three years later. In the pages of that memo James Webb planted his personal stake in the ground on the critical relationship between force structure and budget allocations. What is more, the ideas he espoused were clearly not based on service parochialism since the one service that stood to gain the most from a realignment of Defense Department's resources was still over two years away from his leadership. As the 1980's progressed and changes of Soviet leadership manifested unheard of initiatives and reforms in the Soviet Union, the topics reviewed in Webb's memo begin to take on an aura of foresight and understanding of the opportunities at hand in this dynamic period. Couple the international changes with force structure reforms necessitated by budget cuts at home and the relevance of this document becomes even clearer.

3. Moving On

"By the end of 1986 I had actually stayed longer in DoD than I thought I would" (Interview, June 15, 1998). In January 1987 Assistant Secretary of Defense James Webb submitted his resignation to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. True to his word that he did not enter government service for the purpose of building a career, Webb planned to return to writing and was to begin a new novel after leaving (Timberg, 1995). He was offered another position within the Department as well as three ambassadorships, to include the Philippines and Burma, but turned them down (Interview, June 15, 1998). On

February 11, 1987, while sitting in Deputy Secretary of Defense William Taft's office conducting his outbrief, Webb received a call from Weinberger. Over the phone he was offered the Secretary of the Navy's job in place of the departing John Lehman. "I just couldn't pass that up, so I said I would do it." (Interview, June 15, 1998)

Asked about what attracted him to stay after he had clearly decided to get out of the Pentagon, Webb recalled what had first caused him to enter government service. "I had written [and] thought so much about what the military's problems were, how to make it work, and that sort of thing that I felt that if I had the opportunity I should come in and put my money where my mouth was. I mean it's very easy to sit on the outside and criticize, but I wanted to go in and really put myself in issues" (Interview, February 11, 1999). Webb's nomination to the post was announced a few days later, and he sat for his second confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee on April 6, 1987.

C. SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

Webb's tenure as Secretary of the Navy began on April 10, 1987. Throughout the period of time he was in office he dealt with a variety of different issues. Some of the more prominent topics with which he initially had to contend included a situation with Navy promotion boards and determining whether or not two Naval Academy athletes should be allowed to enter the arena of professional sports without serving their entire service commitment (Moore, March 7, 1988). Those two issues and the following one are all items he was questioned about during his confirmation hearings (United States

Senate, 1988). That May he also ordered the Marine Corps to conduct an examination to determine whether current equipment and structure detracted from the service's ability to flexibly perform its missions, perhaps harkening back to the piece he had written over fifteen years earlier on the Corps' roles and missions (Moore, March 7, 1988).

1. The 600-Ship Navy and the Maritime Strategy

In order to better understand the culmination of Webb's service in the Pentagon and the issues surrounding it, one must understand the ship building program initiated by the Reagan administration when it took office in 1981 (Friedman, 1988). During the Carter administration the fleet reached a 30-year low of 479 vessels (Charles, 1987; Wilson, May 2, 1987). The Republican platform in the presidential campaign of 1980 called for the Navy to expand to a size of 600 ships. To build the argument around why these ships were necessary, the administration relied on Navy Secretary John Lehman (Friedman, 1988).

Lehman laid out his justification for the build-up of the Navy to a goal of 600 ships in writing, linking it to a Maritime Strategy. His logic, based on geo-political realities that encompassed the vast distances of the oceans, alliances abroad, and increased Soviet presence in blue water operations, outlined 15 carrier battle groups and the escort and auxiliary vessels necessary to support such a force. Lehman went as far as breaking out how many carrier battle groups, battleship surface action groups, and underway replenishment groups would be required, per numbered fleet, in both peacetime and wartime operations. (Lehman, 1986) Several scenarios, based on the way many

people *thought* a war in Europe might progress, also contributed to supporting the need for this large Navy. Writings identified how the Navy might be utilized to outflank Soviet ground forces by conducting amphibious landings in poorly defended areas, bottle-up home ports of Soviet vessels, or move to specific locations on the map in order to pursue and destroy Soviet subsurface and surface vessels. (Lehman, 1986; Wilson, March 16, 1987; Friedman, 1988)

Webb supported the rebuilding of the fleet from the start. He testified at his confirmation hearing that he was committed to the expansion of the fleet. He added, "There is nothing magical about the 600-ship Navy, except that to recall 20 years ago we had a 1,000-ship Navy, and that our interests and alliances have, if anything, become more rather than less dependent on seapower." (United States Senate, 1988) Well aware of how large the Navy had been at the time of his graduation from Annapolis, after taking office in the Navy Department he inaugurated a study to analyze fleet size (in ships and personnel) compared to the operational requirements demanded of the Navy. The results of the study illustrated that the size of the fleet was not historically dependent, from the years 1969 to 1987 specifically, on the obligations the Navy was expected to support around the world. As the number of vessels in the fleet increased or decreased, so too did the numbers of personnel the Navy recruited or retained in order to man and support the force structure. Interestingly, though, no matter the size of the fleet, the number of operational commitments and requirements of the Navy remained relatively constant across the two decades inclusive to the study. (Interview, November 5, 1998)

Though Webb certainly supported the administration's goal to achieve a 600-ship Navy, he expressed concern over how that objective was rationalized. The argument, he said,

"was counterproductive in the long run because [it] was dependent on a few battlefield scenarios that were very weak...The idea that you needed fifteen carrier battle groups and 600 ships in order to go up the Kola peninsula and defeat the Soviets a specific way was a misuse of reality. You didn't need to go that far to make the case. Then what happens is when that threat goes away then everything falls away with it. You should be able to make the case for a 600-ship Navy, 600 is notional, but for a larger Navy for two reasons. One is for operational scenarios in the absence of war, and the need to have a redundancy in place, a natural redundancy in place, if indeed there is a war...the other is what Liddel-Hart used to call grand strategy. Just the grand strategy of a maritime nation demands that we show the flag...What happens when the fleet disappears? Maybe it isn't the vacuum theory, but it's certainly the physical presence of the United States around the world that makes a difference. When our interests are as spread out as they are, we need to have a Navy out there. (Interview, February 11, 1999)

When Webb took office, the Navy was rapidly approaching the 600-ship goal. In fact, the number of ships in commission at Webb's swearing in was 557 (Charles, April 3, 1987). Within the following ten months that number grew to 580 (News Services, 1988).

2. The Gulf

The first six months of Webb's tenure were marked with increased naval activity in the Persian Gulf. In January of 1987, the Kuwaiti government solicited the help of the United States in protecting its shipping in the Persian Gulf. The Reagan administration decided in May to reflag 11 Kuwaiti vessels and protect their transit through the Straits of Hormuz and into the Persian Gulf. The Kuwaitis, allied with the Iraqis, were exporting

Iraqi oil and unloading weapons from ships berthed in Kuwaiti harbors that were subsequently supplied to Iraq for its war against Iran. (Timberg, 1995) The Iranians, for obvious reasons, had an interest in halting or retarding such shipments. Webb was not the Secretary at the time the decision was made. However, after a mistaken Iraqi attack of the U.S. frigate *Stark* occurred in May, in July Webb sent Secretary Weinberger a note questioning the administration's policy in pursuing such an operation.

In addition to questioning what the conditions for victory or success were, Webb also argued that the United States should not bear this burden alone. He included in the memo that the countries within the Gulf and U.S. allies with interests there should assume a more active role in the region's security. (McGee, 1987; Weinberger, 1991) Webb also threatened to forestall a measure (in which the Navy would have to indemnify civilian barge owners for any losses) that called for 'nesting' barges together in the Gulf in order to moor minesweepers and base special operations troops and helicopters aboard them. Although U.S. forces were present there for the security of the region, no country would allow U.S. ships to berth in their ports (Timberg, 1995).

Nonetheless, the escort operation began that summer. Despite the added security of escorting Navy vessels, on a number of occasions civilian freighters were either struck by mines or harassed by Iranian gunboats (Weinberger, 1991; Crowe, 1993). The convoying of ships continued until the cease-fire of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988. Overflow from a busy summer of 1987 spilled into the autumn. In retaliation for Iranian gunboat

attacks against shipping in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. Navy mounted a surface action against Iranian bases suspected of supporting the attacks (Teicher, 1993; Timberg, 1995).

3. Changes

On November 5, 1987, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger resigned his position having served since the Reagan administration came to office in 1981. By all accounts Weinberger had provided the Defense Department with a certain character. Indicative of that character was a firm belief in the establishment and sustainment of a large U.S. military (Brinkley, 1987). Weinberger was known to not only become deeply involved in details of the Department, but was also stalwart in defense of programs and principles he considered important (Interview, 1989; Interview, March 18, 1999)

In the face of declining budgets, Weinberger leaving office proclaimed, "If you have a choice between deficit reduction and too low a defense budget, I would always come down in favor of worrying much more about the nation's security than whether or not there's some bookkeeping transactions that seem to involve deficits" (Cushman, November 6, 1987). Weinberger contended that Defense spending should not suffer when there were many domestic programs that could afford to be cut. However, as early as Weinberger's resignation the Pentagon's comptroller was suggesting that force structure reductions, while not favored, would occur if the budget needed cutting (Cushman, November 6, 1987).

In Weinberger's place President Reagan nominated his National Security Advisor, Frank Carlucci. Although much of Carlucci's career was in the foreign service, he was

no stranger to the Pentagon, as he served in the first years of the administration as Weinberger's deputy. (Sciolino, 1987; Cushman, November 8, 1987) Carlucci also brought a different personality to the Defense Department. Regarded as a man who was more willing than his predecessor to compromise, one official went on to say that Carlucci was "much less ideological than Weinberger" (Sciolino, 1987). In a departure from Weinberger's insistence that the defense budget continue to rise, at his confirmation hearing Carlucci said that in order to mediate discussions between the Congress and administration over budget reductions, "I think we have to look at everything. I don't think anything can be sacrosanct." (Cushman, November 13, 1987) In addition to the change in attitude toward the budget, Carlucci's personality also changed the position of Secretary of Defense. William H. Taft, IV, who served both Weinberger and Carlucci closely, made the comment that, unlike Weinberger's need for detail, Carlucci was a big picture individual who did not concern himself with details beyond that which he absolutely needed to know (Taft Interview, 1989).

4. Budget Cuts and Decisions

On November 13, 1987, on the heels of Weinberger's resignation letter and ten days prior to his leaving the Pentagon, congressional negotiators reached a consensus on the hereunto-unresolved defense budget for fiscal year 1988. The deal initially placed the military budget between \$289 and \$296 billion dollars. However, President Reagan, in less than a month's time, signed the legislation authorizing the latter amount. Specifically, certain weapons systems in the research and development phase and some

already in production were targeted for elimination or reduced funding. Pertinent to the Navy department were A-6 Intruder improvements, the Burke-class guided missile destroyers, and the Marine Corps' AV-8B Harrier program. (Cushman, November 13, 1987; Halloran, December 5, 1987)

In the wake of the budget deal, on December 4, 1987, newly confirmed Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci ordered the Department of Defense to cut \$33 billion out of the budget being considered for fiscal year 1989. Officially the cuts were in reaction to the budget deal struck the previous month between Congress and the White House. Senior department officials, though, confided to *The Washington Post* that political motives were also very much influencing the decision to willingly slice the budget. (Halloran, December 5, 1987) Around the time of Weinberger's resignation and the announcement that Carlucci would take the reins at the Pentagon, newspaper articles were describing Carlucci as a man who would be willing develop a positive relationship with Capitol Hill (Sciolino, 1987). Beyond preempting a clash with Congress over budgets for the following year and shielding the Department from cuts the Congress may try to impose on the Pentagon, some believed that the move was made in an effort to give the 1988 Republican Presidential candidate a favorable issue to brandish in the campaign (Halloran, December 5, 1987). Webb offered, in an interview, that, "My view of that is that he did not want to be vulnerable to criticism when he went to Congress" (Interview, June 23, 1998).

The order to reduce the defense budget by some ten percent was not popular with many serving officers. Using words like "chaos" and "turmoil" to describe the process, many felt that the decision was unwise (Halloran, December 5, 1987). One Pentagon budget specialist commented, "I don't know how you rationally plan under these circumstances. I guess the answer is, you don't" (Cushman, November 8, 1987). As if to portend what might be coming the way of the services, Carlucci had commented in his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee in November that, "It is becoming very clear to me that we may well be talking about a different kind of military force, at least a different size military force" (United States Senate, 1988). Though not specifically saying it, such comments lead one to believe that force structure and personnel were probable reduction objectives prior to the new Secretary ever assuming office.

Webb's recollections add credence to what many were saying outwardly and what Carlucci was publicly avoiding saying specifically. That November, shortly after Carlucci's arrival at the Pentagon, he called all of the service secretaries together. He told them that he was looking for reductions in force structure. Based on this meeting, Webb said he believed force structure was specified because "the easiest argument to make in Congress under a budget reduction is that all of the services are giving up force structure. It's just simpler that way." (Interview, June 23, 1998)

For his part, Carlucci spoke on the issue of the 600-ship Navy in the spring of 1989. His comments on the subject reflect his public support of the administration's

goal, but they also illustrate his personal reluctance to completely buy into the concept. He said that he understood and concurred with the idea of maintaining a 15-carrier force. However, he was concerned that the numerical goal of 600 was "artificial." He indicated his lack of enthusiasm by saying that the "numerical goal...might tend to erode quality" and "result in shortchanging the manning of ships." Furthermore, he said he regarded the figure as a "public relations gimmick." (Interview, April 1989)

Shortly after the mandate for cuts was announced, Under Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett advised Webb that he believed the Navy could meet the Defense Department's requirements without losing ships (Interview June 23, 1998). Such a proposition was undoubtedly attractive to Webb based on not only a desire to support the administration's goal of attaining a 600-ship Navy, but also on his personal belief that the United States required a large Navy to protect its interests abroad. Webb said he met with Carlucci and Taft to discuss the issue of budget cuts across the Defense Department. He forwarded a copy of the memorandum he had written for Ikle in 1984 to Carlucci. Webb maintained that, although his initial proposal was written in 1984, its ideal time for implementation was the present. (Interview, June 23, 1998) This period, when such radical initiatives were being introduced in the Soviet Union and its relations with the West, was what Webb deemed a "classic point in history" (Interview, November 5, 1998). Webb, speaking to Carlucci and Taft, asked them to think broadly in considering the cuts that were suggested. Standing on the hypotheses of his 1984 memo, Webb argued that a decrease of force structure in Europe (specifically withdrawing an Army

division and part of the Air Force's tactical air assets) would demonstrate to the Soviets and Gorbachev that the United States was committed to reducing the military and political tension hanging over Western Europe. In so doing, not only was that advantage gained, but the administration could move toward meeting budget requirements while propelling the military toward a force configured to better respond to American responsibilities and interests around the world. By Webb's own admission, though he was resolute in his argument, his points largely fell on deaf ears. (Interview, June 23, 1998)

Carlucci and Deputy Secretary of Defense Taft directed the services to submit their recommendations for cuts to the Pentagon's comptroller by December 7 (Halloran, December 15, 1987). Several days after that deadline, *The Washington Post* published an article titled 'Navy Defies Carlucci Order in Trimming Spending.' The article reported that Secretary Webb's response, though conceding to hold personnel end strength constant, fell short by \$900 million of the Navy Department's assigned \$11.6 billion reduction. An unidentified official advised that the shortcoming was due to Webb's assertion that to fully comply with the mandated reductions would place unacceptable hazards on the service. (Halloran, December 15, 1987) In light of the Navy's increased presence in the Persian Gulf, he also told Carlucci that month that, though he accepted the "reality of the political mandates requiring budget cuts," he believed that there was "no basis to change this administration's concept of the 600-ship Navy" (Cushman, February 23, 1988).

Over the course of the next two months the Department of the Navy submitted two more budget proposals to the Defense Department for consideration. In preparing each budget proposal, Webb's goal was to save force structure. He was insistent on saving the very thing that the Secretary of Defense targeted in the Navy inventory—ships. According to Webb, his firm stance on force structure was a position he enunciated from the start of the budget planning process.

I convened the top people in the Navy and the Marine Corps for an internal meeting on the budget reductions. We had a meeting in the Pentagon with thirty top people including the Commandant [of the Marine Corps], the CNO [Chief of Naval Operations], the Under Secretary [of the Navy]. I basically said, 'this is what I believe.' I had the memorandum that I had written in 1984, and I said, 'this is what I'm talking off of—this is what I believe. If we win this then you will see a reshaping of the American military.' I had a lot of support but at the same time who knows when you fight a battle like that whether they think it's quixotic or not (Interview, June 23, 1998).

I was doing this [budget planning] with Stan Arthur. I was doing this with my number crunchers and force structure guys. We'd sit down and I'd say, 'Okay, this one didn't work. Now show me another way.' I wasn't creating these [budget proposals] out of my own head. What I was doing was, as sort of my leadership imperative through the time, was that the uniformed service should make the decisions that affect them based on the broad guidelines of civilian control. My point to them was, 'We are not giving up force structure. Now, am I being unrealistic?' And they would say, 'We can do it this way.' [And I would say] 'Can you do it this way and live with it?' [And they would say] 'Yes.' And then they would pick that apart (Interview, February 11, 1999).

All three separate budgets, void of cuts in force structure, were forwarded from the Navy to the Secretary of Defense through Deputy Secretary Taft. Each time, Taft returned from Carlucci's office to report to the Department of the Navy, "Frank wants ships" (Cushman, February 24, 1988; Interview, February 11, 1999).

Over a decade later, reflecting on his mindset at the time of these discussions, Webb remarked, "One of the historical models that was on my mind at the time was a fairly clear parallel with the revolt of the admirals when naval carrier aviation was on the table" (Interview, June 23, 1998). He continued by pointing out that, though Secretary of the Navy Sullivan resigned in protest, his actions prompted the Navy's admirals to harden their position and fight for the future of naval aviation. He continued by saying,

The revolt of the admirals was a very important moment in the history of naval aviation. To me there was a lot more on the table this time—the force structure of the Navy as we inevitably reshaped our positioning around the world. Quite ironically, Gorbachev did exactly what I was suggesting that Reagan do. Right after this Gorbachev stood up and said, 'I'm cutting back the Soviet military by 700 thousand people. Mr. Reagan, what are you going to do?' All Gorbachev was doing was adjusting to the withdrawal from Afghanistan, but he got worldwide press out of it. (Interview, June 23, 1998)

As this saga concerning budgeting for the Navy dragged out from November of 1987 until February of 1988, two relevant events occurred concerning Webb and the ideas he was fostering toward a shift in the make-up of the American military. On January 13, 1988, Webb delivered a speech to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. (Timberg, 1995). In this speech Webb said that it was time for the Western European nations to take greater responsibility for their own defense. Also, given the increased U.S. engagement with Asian affairs ranging from commerce to politics, it was time for America to duplicate those involvements militarily so as to safeguard its interests and obligations in that part of the world. (Webb, January 18, 1988) He went on to discuss the expanding presence of the Soviet military throughout Asia to include the Far

East and the Middle East. He called on Japan to shoulder a greater share of its own defense as well. Finally, he argued that more attention must be paid to Latin America where Cuba and the Soviet Union were already involved. (Webb, January 18, 1988)

Reflecting on the budget reduction campaign that was simultaneously being waged in the Pentagon, Webb noted that decreases in U.S. force structure must be handled with an eye toward potential crisis response actions. To this end Webb alluded to the significant role the Navy should play in responding to such situations when he said, "To the greatest extent possible, forces of the future should be free to deploy and maneuver, to concentrate at a crisis point and project military force at that point without the necessity of negotiating base rights or the unavoidable involvement in local conflict that such base rights imply" (Webb, January 18, 1988).

He continued by extolling the benefits and capabilities that a strong naval presence gave to not only U.S. policy abroad, but also the defense of alliances and commitments. Defending the need for the Navy to strive for its goal of 600 ships, Webb reminded the audience that the Navy had reached a low point in 1979 that elongated strenuous deployments and overworked a shrinking body of naval personnel while maintaining its operational tempo. (Webb, January 18, 1988) Sending a message to the Secretary of Defense and the other services in the Pentagon, Webb added, "It would seem illogical to reduce the size of our sea services at the very moment in history when they should be assuming an even greater role...unless our leaders wish to consciously acknowledge that we will be unable to meet the contingencies of the future" (Cushman,

February 23, 1988). The content of the speech touched, in one way or another, on topics about which Webb felt very strongly. One should note that the timing of this speech, given its content about the necessity for a strong Navy, was hardly coincidental.

This speech immediately drew the ire of Secretary of State George Shultz. Shultz was particularly incensed over Webb's comments about the allies taking greater responsibility for their own defense and particularly a remark he made implying an overemphasis on European issues. The Secretary of State was further angered because the speech had not been cleared by him. (Timberg, 1995) Webb commented that, far from "shoot[ing] it in the blind," he had Secretary Carlucci review his comments prior to delivery. Other than Carlucci making a suggestion concerning Japanese rearmament, the Secretary of Defense had no objections to its content. Webb said, referring to his speech, "...it really was as far as I could go in terms of the authority of my office" in making comments or suggestions about the use of the military and the way the administration should approach foreign affairs. Webb went on to say, "...what I was attempting to do was to save the force structure of the Navy and shape the future force structure of the American military. That's what I was trying to get at by giving that speech." (Interview, January 19, 1999) "I decided that it would be a good time to really enunciate what was going on in terms of the force structure issue and where the threats were around the world and how the United States should be playing on foreign policy" (Interview, June 23, 1999).

The second significant event of this period occurred in February. The Norfolk-based *Virginian-Pilot* ran an article, embedded with comments given to their reporter from an official in the Navy Department, that the Navy would fight the retirement of sixteen frigates proposed to the Congress by the Defense Department (Timberg, 1995). Secretary Carlucci, in response, sent a copy of the article to Webb. He included a memo to Webb telling him that the comments in the article should be denied. Referring to the note, which he kept, Webb read into the suggestion that he was to "deny the reality that we were even contesting the force structure issue (Interview, June 23, 1998)."

Newspaper articles that chronicled these budget reductions put the entire process into context. Just as Carlucci was coming to office in the Pentagon in November of 1987, one writer pointed out that, although cuts in the vicinity of \$30 to \$40 billion seemed certain for fiscal year 1989, "no one has begun to consider seriously how this ought to be done" (Cushman, November 8, 1987). In February, a *Washington Post* article said, "The proposed ship retirements represent fresh evidence of how the military is restructuring itself to accommodate the big cuts Congress has made in the defense budget the last three years" (Wilson, February 8, 1988). The first article criticized the apparent lack of forethought that was directed toward how budget cuts would be achieved in the Pentagon. The second article, written three months later, demonstrated that the Navy apparently achieved these cuts by trimming off its older combatants. In January Anthony Battista left his position as a senior staff aide to the House Armed Services Committee. Ironically, he departed advocating that the Navy give top priority to combating improving

Soviet underwater threats. (Wilson, January 13, 1988) Though Battista was primarily encouraging the development of better American submarines to hunt and destroy Soviet boats, the very frigates slated to be retired were anti-submarine warfare assets as well.

Alluding to the seemingly illogical ways in which Navy budget cuts were being pursued, Webb wondered, "Is there a strategy or is this like a balloon: When there's more money the balloon gets larger, and when there's less money you let some of the air out of the balloon and it gets smaller" (Timberg, 1995)?

Furthermore, there were still issues being debated within the Pentagon over the fate of those frigates. For his part, Webb believed that the battle was close to being turned in the favor of the Navy Department. He said that closely working the issue with Deputy Secretary Taft was yielding results. "I think that after this third time through that I had had Will Taft convinced how important it was" (Interview, February 11, 1999). Despite this apparent success, though, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, the same man who replaced Webb in that job, confided to Taft that the Reserves did not want the frigates due to their old age. When Reserve Affairs turned a cold shoulder to the frigates, Taft found an out. He could make the argument that, despite the Navy Department's insistence on keeping the ships in at least the Naval Reserve, they were assets the Reserves did not want. Underscoring how this issue came down to the wire, Webb went on to say, "If the Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs, who I'd helped...if he'd have come to me instead of Will Taft I would never have had to resign. We would've pulled it off." (Interview, February 11, 1999) In the end the frigates were

retired and sold to Portugal where, ironically, Secretary of Defense Carlucci had once been an ambassador (Interview June 23, 1998; Carlucci Biography, 1999).

5. Resigning

On February 22, 1988, Secretary of the Navy Webb sent his letter of resignation to President Reagan. In the letter Webb highlighted the ten percent reduction in funding the Defense Department was forced to augment as compared to the five percent reduction in funding levied on non-defense agencies. He also noted his consistent belief that reductions were occurring without sufficient regard for their impact on national security. He outlined the Navy Department's attempt to achieve the required cost savings without compromising the administration's 600-ship goal, but he confided that, "I can only conclude that the decision to reduce the level of our fleet to a point that it may never reach the 600-ship goal was motivated by other than military or strategic reasoning." (Webb, February 22, 1988)

Ostensibly, the final straw for Webb was the Defense Department's retreat from its goal of achieving a 600-ship Navy. On the day of his resignation, Webb confided to Under Secretary Garrett that he "refused to be the father of the 350-ship Navy" (Interview, November 5, 1998). He said later, "I wasn't going to be the guy that started walking it back" (Interview, February 11, 1999).

Webb did not tell Carlucci that he was going to resign. Instead, he had his resignation letter delivered to the White House and merely dropped a copy of it on the desk of one of Carlucci's aides. He said later that he considered his actions appropriate

since it was the President that had actually hired him. Secretary Carlucci learned of Webb's resignation when it was first made public. When news of the resignation reached the press, several articles commented that, in not informing the Defense Secretary of his decision, he violated protocol and etiquette (Carrington, 1988; Cushman, February 23, 1988; Interview, February 23, 1988). Webb refused to give Carlucci the opportunity to fire him from the Navy Secretary's position because the two did not see eye to eye.

He elaborated on this by describing how he envisioned a confrontation with Carlucci. "The only way I could have gone to Frank Carlucci at the end was with an ultimatum and I know I would have lost. There's no question in my mind I would have lost. What that would have meant would be that by the time I had gotten back to my office Frank Carlucci would have put on the street that I had been fired. I knew how he operated. The only way for me to do this, and to preserve my reputation, in my view, was to resign to the person that had hired me. It was President Reagan. And that's what I did (Interview, February 11, 1999)."

IV. AFTERMATH

Fallout from Webb's resignation was, not surprisingly, widely reported in the immediate wake of his departure. Editorials and commentary continued to appear into the following month as well. Responses ranged from sincere regret at the Navy Department's loss to cynical skepticism about Webb's agenda. Webb's quick departure was largely unexpected. For this reason the Defense Secretary, for one, did not make any statements regarding his relationship with Webb prior to his resignation. Therefore, most of Secretary Carlucci's personal statements were made in the press in retrospect and do not reflect his attitude or thoughts during the debate he and Webb conducted over force structure.

A. RESPONSE

On the day of his resignation Webb invited a small group of reporters into his office. He commented to the gathered press members that he believed the Pentagon needed leadership and strategic vision. He went on to tell the group that he felt Secretary Carlucci needed to spend less time on Capitol Hill and with his former colleagues at the State Department, and should instead focus on the senior leadership within the building. His comments regarding Secretary Carlucci were highlighted in the ensuing coverage of his resignation. Many articles cited a poor relationship between Webb and Carlucci as a reason for the resignation. Webb, however, maintained throughout that his inability to

defend the cuts in force structure levied on the Navy by Carlucci was the factor behind his departure (Healy, 1988).

1. Reaction from the Secretary of Defense

The day after Webb submitted his resignation, the newspapers, looking for a retort from the Defense Secretary, found very little with which to go to press. Although a cordial statement was released from the Secretary's office expressing regret at Webb's resignation, articles in the newspapers largely touched on past statements made by Carlucci referencing the shape he thought the American military should begin to take (Carrington, 1988). Carlucci commented, upon assuming office amid the budget argument in November, that he wanted to oversee a smaller, better paid, and better equipped force than one in which the cost of weaponry affected the readiness of forces to fight (Cushman, February 23, 1988). Additionally, the morning of Webb's resignation (but prior to Webb delivering his letter) Carlucci told reporters that his method of implementing budget cuts within the Pentagon would alleviate the need for Congress to dismember the services in an arbitrary fashion. His plan, he continued, avoided the "politically expedient" choices he expected from the Congress that would have heedlessly weakened national defense (Healy, 1988).

The next day, February 24, Secretary Carlucci's comments in the wake of Webb's resignation were reported. Carlucci testified to the House Armed Services committee that, in matters of cuts in force structure, Webb never came to personally address his concerns. He continued by stating that he was not aware that Webb had any intention of

resigning until he read the letter of resignation. Defending his program to reduce the size of the Pentagon's budget, Carlucci continued by reminding the congressmen that, "Tough choices had to be made to accommodate this reduction in the short time available" (Schafer, 1988). He added that, contrary to Webb's comments about abandoning the concept of a 600-ship fleet, that goal was merely delayed into the 1990's. (Schafer, 1988) Carlucci elaborated a year later, indicating that he did not see a "difference between 600 and 574." He stated that once the administration cited the 600-ship Navy as a goal, he was required to at least "pay lip service to it." (Carlucci Interview, May 17, 1989)

Carlucci did admit that upon reviewing some of Webb's speeches he detected discontent. The speeches, he said, "reflected a certain divergence from the President's national security strategy," adding that although he sent "a note or two saying I'd like to hear from him on this...he never elected to come talk to me." (Moore, March 7, 1988) Additionally, he said that with regard to the budget, he thought Webb had protested to Secretary Ball but never to him (Interview, May 4, 1989). The two secretaries' comments are clearly complementary in this case, as Webb admitted that he did not seek an audience with Carlucci in the end because he thought he knew what the outcome would be.

2. Public Reaction: Critical

In the wake of Webb's resignation many newspaper articles, editorials, and reader commentaries appeared on the subject. Of the extensive documentation this author analyzed, two principal themes emerge from those commenting on Webb's action. On

one side, some believed that Webb's resignation was tendered because he, and therefore the entire Navy, did not get its way in negotiating the Pentagon's revised budget. These comments are largely focused on the need, in 1988, to quickly and radically alter defense spending. The other theme found in the literature identifies with Webb's agenda, even if not agreeing with every aspect of it, to model the American defense structure to its required missions instead of a certain percent of the budget.

The London Times' initial coverage of the resignation was an obvious reference to the Pentagon's days under Caspar Weinberger. *The Times'* story cited Webb as "one of the last conservative hardliners" in the Defense Department. (*The London Times*, 1988) Another report, focusing on the economics of the resignation, quoted a Pentagon budget planner who called Webb "a casualty of fiscal reality, as the 600-ship Navy is" (Carrington, 1988). Headlines of the article detailing Webb's departure in *The Los Angeles Times* also seemed to view the resignation in light of fiscal considerations when it reported "Navy Secretary Resigns Over Budget Cutbacks: Webb Says He Can't Support Carlucci, Plan To Mothball 16 Ships" (Healy, 1988).

The Washington Post's editorial ran a piece two days after the resignation accusing Webb of overreacting to the fiscal limitations imposed on the Navy. In an article that centered entirely around the need to control spending by the Defense Department, the editorial concluded with a comment that Webb should have been less indignant and more thankful that the cuts only took a small share of what the editor believed was an over-funded service. (*The Washington Post*, February 24, 1988)

The New York Times' editorial was also critical of Webb's departure. Its editorial, 'Mr. Webb's Petulant Resignation,' chastised Webb's resignation as an affront. Citing the lack of personal congeniality between Webb and Carlucci, the editor continued by questioning such a combative individual's aptitude to hold such an office. As in the instances cited above, *The New York Times*' editorial viewed Webb's withdrawal from office as a disagreement solely over appropriation of Navy funding. It did acknowledge that the issues Webb broached with regard to the Western Europeans assuming a greater role in their own defense were important; however, the editorial charged, the nation's first priority should be to the Pentagon's levels of spending. (*The New York Times*, February 24, 1988)

3. Public Reaction: Supportive

On the other side of the debate over Webb's resignation, one individual, referenced only as a colleague of Webb, said, "Jim figures when there's a decision he can't live with, that descending to politics is improper and unmanly. That's...the way he looks at civilians. Civilians do that sort of thing, not honorable people" (Healy, 1988). The White House response, delivered by Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater, commended Webb for doing "the honorable thing" after discovering he could not support the policies of the administration (Associated Press, February 24, 1988). As a side-note, when asked if he thought the nearly \$12 billion in cuts directed toward the Navy was an initiative directed by the White House, Webb responded that he believed it was Carlucci's idea. He said he believed it came from Carlucci because the Defense Secretary was attempting to

demonstrate, in the short amount of time remaining in the Reagan administration, that he could be an effective Secretary of Defense. (Interview, February 11, 1999)

One article touched on the fundamental matter affecting Webb's disagreement with Carlucci. After resigning, Webb told a reporter that he was considering a request from certain congressional committees to testify with regard to his view of how the American military should be shaped. The paper concluded that this effort to lobby the Congress would have been very difficult to do while in office. However, with the celebrity caused by his resignation, the reporter speculated that the issue on Webb's mind might draw greater attention. (Cushman, February 24, 1988) Three months after leaving office Webb testified before the House Armed Services Committee on defense burdensharing alternatives for the future (House of Representatives, 1988).

In his commentary piece written almost a week after Webb's letter of resignation reached the President, syndicated columnist George Will wrote a piece entitled "Navy Loses a Warrior" (Will, 1988). In it, Will said, "The number 600 should not be treated as a talisman, but the defense budget, and especially the Navy, should be tailored to the nature of the nation's security needs, not budgetary convenience. The Navy is especially central to recurring American controversies" (Will, 1988). Will concluded the article with a shot at the bean counters and accountants figuring budget savings. He said that the unquantifiable presence of a battleship or aircraft carrier off the coast of a potential adversary or unruly thug was not something upon which a price could be attached. Such

an intangible effect made it difficult to compute hard, numerical data with which to argue effectiveness. (Will, 1988)

Shortly after departing, Webb received a very complimentary letter from one of his subordinates. What is interesting about the author, then-Vice Admiral Leon Edney, is that while Commandant of Midshipmen at the Naval Academy six years prior, he had informally banned Webb's access to the school ostensibly because of an article he wrote about the presence of women there (Timberg, 1995). After his resignation, though, Edney wrote to tell Webb that "...I have been one of the fortunate officers privileged to serve you on a close daily basis during the past year. In doing so I have come to respect and admire your leadership, integrity and intellectual capacity more than any other individual I have been privileged to serve under in my 31 years" (Edney, 1988). In a hand-written addendum to the bottom of the letter, Edney added, "...you made coming to work at the Pentagon fun—which I did not believe possible" (Edney, 1988).

A reader of the *Washington Post* wrote to the commentary page of the paper to express his opinions about the Webb resignation. He recognized that Webb's resignation, while far from finding the solution to the services' proper roles and sizes, brought the issue to light. He concluded that, outrageous as it was for Webb to have had to resign, such a move would hopefully start a debate over what the nation's priorities abroad should be. (Dabbar, 1988)

The same day columnist Philip Geyelin submitted an article entitled, "Webb: A Useful Tantrum" (Geyelin, 1988). Although the title implies that Webb resigned in a less

than professional manner, the text of the article reads somewhat differently. Geyelin cited Webb's January speech to the National Press Club where he spoke about the necessity of burden sharing with the allies and reconsideration of where America's global emphasis should lie. He sided with Webb's view that military force structure should be built around anticipated contingencies rather than convenient, \$12 billion budget reductions for each service. Like the article above, he speculated that Webb's resignation might spark a debate over how the American military should take shape. (Geyelin, 1988)

Echoing these sentiments, *The New York Times'* editorial, over a week later, conceded that the plan laid out by Carlucci was not beneficial for the Defense Department as a whole. It accused Carlucci's budget cuts of maintaining costly research and development projects while scaling back the present force structure and training requirements that adversely affect readiness. It concluded that the effort underway to trim defense spending was a poor way to insure national security aims. (*New York Times*, March 7, 1988)

4. Reaction From The Hill

Congress, like the press and its readers, was split in its interpretation of Webb's resignation. The same two general themes emerged from Congress as from around the country. Criticism and support came from both political parties. In one camp were those who believed this was entirely an episode based on one man's unwillingness to stick out his tenure when things did not go his way. On the other side of the argument were

congressmen who seemed to believe there was a message in Webb's resignation and that the Congress should force the issue of proper force structuring to the forefront.

Perhaps not surprisingly considering his stalwart support of the Army, Representative William Dickinson (R-Ala.) lashed out at what he considered merely a fiscal issue. He said, "If anybody's been living in Fat City, it's been the Navy the last few years. And we worked toward a 600-ship Navy. That's fine—but [there's] nothing magical about that." (Moore, March 7, 1988)

Jim Whittinghill, chief-of-staff to then-Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.), took a shot at Webb indirectly. In complimenting the administration's choice of William Ball to replace Webb, he said it was good to see someone coming to the Navy Department who was willing to serve Carlucci rather than advance his own program. (Houston, 1988)

The most vocal attack, though, came from Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.). In an article titled "2 Ex-Navy Secretaries Keelhauled," Bentsen openly criticized Webb and his predecessor John Lehman for having "Lone Ranger attitude[s] which I consider irresponsible" and for being "shortsighted, close-minded, and parochial" (News Services, 1988). Speaking specifically about Webb, the Senator condemned the National Press Club speech as a reckless oratory that impaired American diplomacy in the wake of the treaty signed with the Soviets to eliminate Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces in December of 1987. Continuing, Bentsen commented that the Navy should focus more on giving its sailors better pay than "heedlessly pursuing the arbitrary goal of a 600-ship

Navy.” Adding that he believed the Navy was the most favored of all the services in terms of defense expenditures, he again singled out Webb by saying, “The loss of one round in the never-ending debate over resource allocation should not prompt the team captain to grab the ball and go home” (News Services, 1988). Meanwhile, he praised Secretary Carlucci’s “excellent start” in conceding to “the new economic realism” by aggressively working to halt the Pentagon’s plans for swift expansion. (News Services, 1988)

In a statement seemingly congruent with Webb’s critique of the Defense Department’s force structure plan, Senator William Cohen (R-Maine) noted, “I think what his resignation will do will cause us to look at our commitments” (News Service, 1988). From the other side of the aisle Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) said he believed the resignation “has obviously launched an important new stage of the debate about Pentagon priorities and the size and type of Navy we need” (Cushman, February 23, 1988). Former Representative, and at the time Presidential candidate, Jack Kemp chastised the Defense Secretary and the administration. He said it was a “terrible mistake accommodating...to the mindless cuts in defense,” adding “I think the wrong man resigned. It shouldn’t have been Webb. It should have been Carlucci.” (Schafer, 1988)

B. WEBB’S CURTAIN CALL

Aside from the briefing he gave to the press in his office on the day he resigned, the absence of statements attributed to him in the wake of his departure is noticeable. He is oft quoted in newspaper clippings, but for the most part the comments were made days,

weeks, and months in advance of his resignation. The exception was an interview he granted to the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour the day after he submitted his resignation.

Webb led off saying much too heavy an emphasis was being placed on his personal relationship with Secretary Carlucci rather than the more relevant policy considerations at stake. He realized, just a day removed, that there seemed to be much misunderstanding as to why he had stepped down. Just as he had done in his initial meeting with Secretaries Carlucci and Taft and in his National Press Club speech, Webb reiterated his reasoning behind making the argument he did.

He cited the increasing discussion about the INF and START treaties, coupled with the abundant focus on European issues as overshadowing the country's cultural, ethnic, and economic movement toward Latin America and the Pacific region. He also targeted the budget cuts that he thought were unequally shouldered by the Defense Department. He believed many domestic programs were protected from these cuts which, in turn, forced the Pentagon to take on a larger share of total budget reductions. Lastly, Webb illuminated the actual force structure. In explaining to Jim Lehrer the process in which the Navy Department submitted three separate budgets to the Defense Secretary only to have each rejected, Webb told him "My final conclusion on this when each time the answer was you have to take the ships out, even when we could afford them, was that this was not being done for a strategic reason" (Interview, February 23, 1988). He went on to add,

We're saving \$150 million by taking 16 ships out and giving them to other countries, or totally getting rid of them. That's \$10 million a ship. The

reason was in my view a political reason, in that it was considered appropriate to go to the Congress with a budget where the argument could be made that each department was having to take a significant hit in force structure... That is a political reason I couldn't agree with. (Interview, February 23, 1988)

Over the course of the remainder of the interview Webb discussed the need for an enlarged Navy to cover all of the American interests abroad. He talked about the terrible deployment strain placed on the Navy of the late 1970's. Recalling days when ships would go 140 days at sea without seeing land, Webb reminded the audience that, unlike the Army and Air Force, the Navy was always in an operational environment. The operational tempo was not dependent on, and did not decrease, as force structure fell. He also spoke briefly about his comments concerning leadership directed toward Secretary Carlucci and said he was sure that Carlucci probably had problems with him as well. When asked about the likelihood of reentering government service Webb remarked that he was through. He went on to say that he was "not a person who wears a bridle well" (Interview, February 23, 1988). He added that he thought he was unique with respect to some of the experiences he brought to the Pentagon, but he admitted that he was "not a good bureaucrat in [that] the tedium of the bureaucracy does get to me." (Interview, February 23, 1988)

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A. CONCLUSION

In an interview, referring to his National Press Club speech of January 1988, Webb said the authority exercised by the Secretary of the Navy precluded him from going beyond the issues he addressed there. What publicly emerged over the course of that speech was the need to seriously consider, within the national security apparatus, how the nation should best employ its military to cultivate U.S. interests abroad while strategically countering Soviet overtures. Webb, though intimately familiar with each of the services based on his time as an Assistant Secretary, had to limit his commentary to those issues affecting the sea services. Therefore he spoke specifically to the topic of naval strength just as his focus of effort during his final months at the Pentagon was to salvage the Navy's force structure. (Interview, January 19, 1999)

Conscious of the limited jurisdiction a particular service secretary has within the larger Pentagon scheme, Webb admitted that an all-encompassing discussion over what the armed forces should look like was not something the Navy Secretary was going to be able to broach, except maybe at a cocktail party. (Interview, January 19, 1999) In his effort to preserve Navy force structure, though, he said he did have a plan. "My idea was, basically, to gap Carlucci...if we could preserve Navy force structure through that year, then we'd be in a position when Carlucci left to get the thing going and have this argument" (Interview, February 11, 1999).

One can see a connection between Webb's actions and that of the Navy Secretaries discussed in Chapter II. In each case, these men identified a vision for not only the Department, but also argued that the naval service could make a vital contribution to the well being of the nation's security and interests.

Webb specifically referenced the somewhat similar situation in which Secretary of the Navy Sullivan found himself over the issue of the first supercarrier. Webb commented that because he refused to abandon the administration's principal goal of expanding the Navy force structure, he resigned rather than being the one "that started walking it back" (Interview, February 11, 1999)

Neither Sullivan nor Webb was able to comply with the strict boundaries of the law governing their office. Although he never made a comment suggesting it, like Sullivan, Webb was unable to maintain "the effective and timely implementation of policy, program, and budget decisions and instructions of the President or the Secretary of Defense relating to the functions of the Department of the Navy" (Title 10, 1995). It is purely conjecture as to whether or not this piece of Title 10 would have been applied by Carlucci if the debate continued. Clearly Webb's actions, like Sullivan's 40 years before, were in opposition to the policies and budget decisions of the Secretary of Defense.

Another point that should be readily apparent to the reader is that the ideas Webb formulated were not ones he suddenly began to think about once ensconced in a government job. Webb summarized that point by saying, "I think in terms of what the

issues were, and how I felt about them, it was the result of a whole continuum for your whole life...it doesn't connect because someone tells me I'm Assistant Secretary of Defense and I should start thinking about it. It's sort of the other way around" (Interview, February 11, 1999). Clearly, Webb's professional life and the topics on which he spoke and wrote prior to entering the Pentagon in 1984 indicate his extensive association with the American military and national security.

James Webb's resignation was, at the most fundamental level, offered because of his deep-seated belief in what was best for the country. He remarked, a decade after leaving office, that "There are four or five lines in my life I will not cross" (Interview, February 11, 1999). Clearly an issue of this magnitude, which extended far beyond the composition of the sea services alone, was one such line. The reactions collected and presented in the preceding chapter illustrate, to a great extent, the misinterpretation of Webb's exit by those who viewed it as a complaint about the budget.

Webb, of course, was not simply upset with the budget cuts. As he confided to Carlucci after the latter took office, he accepted the reality of having to work within the limitations agreed upon by the administration and Congress (Cushman, February 23, 1988). He seemed to fully comprehend the political maneuvering taking place between the Pentagon and the Hill when he said, "If I were to go over there and say to the Congress, 'Army and Air Force are giving up force structure; the Navy is not,' it's gonna start a fire storm over there. And it would have" (Interview, February 11, 1999). In

hindsight, he admitted, force structure withdrawals did eventually occur in Europe, though, in a very roundabout way. However, in 1988, when U.S. military budgets were not projected to grow and the Cold War was still a reality, James Webb believed that serious, nonparochial discussions about the roles the United States military should play and the shape those forces should take, should have been the preeminent topic of discussion in Defense Department circles. To that end he admits, "It would have caused arguments—but that's the argument we needed to have" (Interview, February 11, 1999).

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While the scope of this research has concerned itself specifically with the aspects of James Webb's resignation, other contributing factors are important to such a discussion. State Department interests, National Security Council concerns, and individual congressional members' opinions (to name but a few) all weigh, in some form or another, into the discussion of a topic like this one.

This research benefited immensely from not only the extensive hours of interviewing the primary subject of the study, but also his willingness to make available many items of his personal correspondence and manuscripts. Logically, this study has relied heavily on the first-person accounts offered by Webb. Where possible, others who were in a position to view the events taking place within the Defense Department were consulted to offer complimentary or differing views. The one official whose input would have provided a more complete panorama of this episode is, of course, Mr. Carlucci. The author contacted Mr. Carlucci during the course of this research and was granted

permission to view the transcripts of his oral history. Although Carlucci commented on Webb's resignation and the goal of achieving a 600-ship Navy in these transcripts, an extended interview could add significant information on this topic.

In order to appreciate fully the sequence of events, particularly from November 1987 until February 1988, Mr. Carlucci's point of view regarding this period is essential. Until these insights become available, research into this event is not fully complete.

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(Nov 1984)

APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, FOR POLICY

SUBJECT: Future Use of Reserve Forces

I apologize for having taken this long to respond to your request for a "think paper" on future use of reserve forces, but I wanted to write the paper myself and have had difficulty finding the time to do so.

On these sorts of issues one should always start with a list of caveats and of principles to be followed. Mine are as follows:

*** We have persistently addressed the "force mix" issue from the bottom rather than from the top, having been required through end strength decisions and other pressures to find functions, one at a time, that might be performed by reserve components, rather than clearly articulating, from a strategic perspective, a military commitment structure in the large.

That being said, my general conclusion, looking into the next decade, is that our active Army and Air Force should become smaller, with a consequent rise in reserve forces, that the Marine Corps should essentially remain the same, with some focus on reserve missions, and that the Navy should continue to grow, both in the active and reserve components. The reduction in Army and Air Force active structure should come about as a result of a reduction of our forces permanently committed to NATO. The increase in the size of our naval forces, both active and reserve, reflects our position as a maritime power with an ever-increasing need to protect our interests in the Pacific, and our need to reassume overall naval dominance elsewhere. This combination would increase our flexibility to respond to crises throughout the world, reduce manpower and other costs, and if properly implemented could actually contribute to the ability of NATO to fight and win against the Warsaw Pact.

Discussion.

1. It is possible to adjust the present NATO defense structure without destabilizing Western Europe or lessening our ability to defend against a conventional attack.

*** We need to reverse this process, and to proceed from a macro view of strategic and policy commitments. This would require that we rearticulate our military commitments in both deterrent (heavily active) and wartime (heavily reserve) scenarios, and to build optimum force mix around these commitments. These commitments should respond to strategic needs rather than to simple momentum.

*** Major changes in force structure would be strongly resisted by many of our allies and from those branches adversely affected in terms of interservice power within the Department of Defense. Such changes also risk sending the wrong signals to our enemies, unless negotiated in the context of mutual realignments, or unless used as an international political lever to demonstrate our sincerity as a nonaggressive power.

We presently deploy almost one-third of our entire Army on the Forward Edge of the Battle Area (FEBA) in one region of the world -- NATO Europe. The size of this deployment has increased greatly since the early 1970's, even as the Army itself has grown smaller. We also have deployed about 40 percent of the fighter-attack squadrons in the Air Force to this FEBA, a marked increase during the time the Air Force also has grown smaller. I believe we could reduce these commitments in consonance with a greater effort by the European nations to provide for their own defense. Squadrons and divisions removed from the FEBA could be placed into the Guard and Reserve as "early reinforcers" in the event of war.

As presently constructed, our military structure in NATO has many vulnerabilities if it came to actually fighting a war. One (and as a former combatant I do not see this as minimal) is the vast number of military dependents who would possibly be cut adrift in a foreign country, and the impact of this reality on those whose minds should be on fighting a war. How would this country respond if a hundred thousand wives and children became hostages at the outbreak of a conventional encounter? Another is the positioning of the army itself: success in European wars has historically been measured as much in numbers of troops killed or captured (the destruction of the opponent's army) as in

territories gained, especially at the beginning. Examples on this point are legion, from both WW I and WW II. The European battlefield is fluid, particularly in the direction our defense is now pointed. The potential loss of a great percentage of our army in an initial thrust, coupled with the lack of a readily available manpower pool beyond the selected reserve, makes us very vulnerable to the sort of "punch and grab" that went on time after time between the Russians and the Germans in WW II. The difference is that those two countries had vast, trained manpower pools, and were able to remain "resilient" for several years, although at great cost (3.7 million German combat dead, 7 million Soviet combat dead), while our manpower pool is slim (about a million total in the Army's selected and individual ready reserve, with no draft mechanism in place behind it). A relocation of a large percentage of our forces, even back to CONUS, would allow both mobility and flexibility in our response, so long as some very important hesitations can be addressed.

The hesitations are manifest, and have been widely verbalized. The key ones, from a purely military perspective, are whether we could or would reinsert our troops once they have been withdrawn, and whether they could be ready to fight on short notice, if even larger numbers of them came from the Guard and Reserve. An ancillary question, from a DoD policy level, is whether they would

disappear altogether, once removed from NATO defense, if an isolationist Congress later decided that our reserve forces were too large as well.

I recognize the obvious political, strategic and tactical dangers in a reduction of NATO force levels. Others, such as yourself, are in a much better position to evaluate its feasibility. If such a decision is made, however, I believe the hesitations, and the dangers themselves, could best be redressed through the following:

- *** An increase in defense spending levels by other NATO countries, who spend a much smaller percentage of their GNP on defense than we do.
- *** Aggressive pursuit of Host Nation Support agreements which trade local manpower for greater technology and hardware.
- *** Ensuring that the permanently deployed American forces are both visible and highly skilled.
- *** Vastly increasing the scale of REFORGER operations to demonstrate our willingness and ability to fight for the survival of Western Europe.

Economic interests also contribute to political loyalties, so long as military capabilities are credible. As something of a "flip side" corollary to this thought, consider that the strategic impact of European dependence on the Soviet pipeline, and the collusion of certain British labor leaders with the Soviets, has probably been as great as any conventional military issue of the day, despite our military presence in Europe. The point is this: an adjustment of military functions, while retaining the clarity of our commitment, should not harm our relationship if our economic ties remain strong.

2. If properly designed, and with the appropriate adjustments among our allies, a "follow-on force" consisting principally of Guard and Reserve units could be capable of aiding the defense of Western Europe more effectively than the present static defense.

I have not had access to sensitive JCS plans, but I am an ardent student of history. In the NATO central sector we are outmanned, outgunned, and without the initiative. To me, this is reminiscent of the German Army at the Russian front's central sector in 1944, where the Soviets counterattacked and drove the Germans from Russia and Eastern Poland. The Front had stabilized, the Soviets conducted a massive buildup on one side, and Hitler would not allow a "step back" movement by the German army, which

would have allowed a flexible response instead of a static battle. The Soviets hit the Germans with 166 division, in that sector alone. Germany's Army Group Center was virtually destroyed in a matter of weeks, with total losses exceeding 200,000 men.

Furthermore, at present the sustainability of key weapons is limited by their cost. This means that, if our forces came under conventional attack, even absent a nuclear or chemical escalation (which one rationally has to expect), we would very likely lose a large portion of our army, expend our key conventional weapons (including tactical aviation assets), and at best fall into some form of trench warfare (recall WW I's trench warfare -- German strategists had been convinced for a generation that the war would not last longer than 39 days). With the advent of NBC, our army could well be destroyed at the outset.

If, on the other hand, we put some distance between the bulk of our own forces and the point of potential attack (as, ironically, Manstein attempted to persuade Hitler to do in 1944), we can respond with the right sort of power at the best places once the enemy has attacked. Rommel did this on a smaller and more mobile scale in North Africa. This allows outnumbered forces to concentrate their mass at key points.

So long as our allies and enemies understand that a restructuring of our forces is not a withdrawal from our commitment, such a repositioning would allow the U.S. military a luxury not available to most of its NATO allies: flexibility and mobility in its response. This flexibility would be analogous to the so-called "Nixon Doctrine" of 1969, in my opinion a sound and articulable strategic policy, which provided that the U.S. 1) would maintain a nuclear umbrella for its allies; 2) would give freely of arms and technical assistance; but 3) would not automatically commit combat troops to "local" conflicts in "third world" scenarios. In any event, the presence of active army units on the ground, even in reduced numbers, would continue to provide a clear deterrent, while our ability to mobilize and inject large numbers of fresh Guard and Reserve units at key points along a more stabilized battlefield would enhance combat effectiveness.

Practical domestic benefits from such an approach would be reduced budget costs due to a relaxation in active manpower needs and a shrinkage in DoD infrastructure expenses in Europe.

The key hurdles, other than the resistance from Army and Air Force leadership to the reduction of the active forces and the possibility of political backlash in Europe, would be these:

- *** Equipment in-theater. POMCUS would have to be expanded. France might be persuaded to agree bilaterally to some form of assistance in this regard.
- *** Airlift. We would have to rely on a greater use in order to compensate for fewer in-theater units, probably as an extension of the present shift of MAC to higher reserve participation. More importantly, we would have to be able to guarantee that such lift would be tactically and practically feasible.
- *** Readiness. Guard and Reserve ground units would require a readiness level that allowed almost immediate deployment. We are exploring how close we can come to this rather remarkable (in an American historical context) goal. In my opinion, the greatest drawbacks at this time relate to available training times, physical fitness, the age of the force (one in six Army guardsmen and reservists are over the age of 40), and equipment needs.

*** Reserve manpower levels. We simply do not know if we can recruit a vastly greater Guard and Reserve. Present manpower levels in the selected reserve are at historic highs. New incentives are in place. The next year or two will be instructive.

3. The size of the Navy should increase, both active and Reserve, as we realign our military in consonance with recent shifts in economic and national interests.

To review certain realities:

*** Contrary to the Soviet Union, we are a maritime nation by geographical and economic necessity. We are even more dependent on these as our balance of trade continues to shift to the Pacific. And yet in recent years, the Soviet navy, not ours, has increased by quantum leaps, particularly in the Pacific.

*** No other service can have the same impact in the third world as a vigorous and proficient navy.

*** In combat, all military formations are vulnerable. Few are less vulnerable than a properly constituted U.S. Navy task force.

*** As accuracies improve it is logical to shift much of our strategic nuclear force away from the homeland to mobile, underwater platforms.

In my 1974 book Micronesia and U.S. Pacific Strategy, I postulated a consolidation of U.S. air and ground forces into an interior position centered on the Mariana Islands, with a much larger seapower presence forward. This realignment was considered desirable because of anticipated fiscal and manpower reductions in the U.S. military, and for political reasons best expressed by the Nixon Doctrine. Since that time, Vietnam has fallen and the Soviet fleet has markedly increased, with warm water ports in the Pacific for the first time in the history of Russia. The regional instability caused by these two occurrences makes it essential that we retain combat troops in Korea for some time, contrary to my earlier belief. Otherwise, I believe the original theory is still valid. Furthermore, this sort of power projection, which does not carry the risk of ground personnel, is particularly well-suited to the volatile nature of still-emerging governmental systems in Asia.

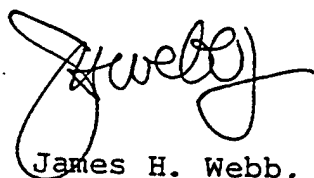
The logic applies to other parts of the world as well. The mobility and potential firepower of a naval task force are perhaps the most demonstrable way to give credibility to potentially hostile negotiations. However, this is only true if the naval presence transcends that of a "maritime presence" (capacity to project) and becomes a true "seapower presence" (capacity to control) -- one backed up with a workable supply train, plus combatant ships that are replaceable and thus can be put at risk.

The 600 ship Navy is in reality a rather modest comeback from a period of very serious neglect. When I was commissioned in 1968, the Navy had 930 ships, and no Indian Ocean commitment. I believe we must continue to build the active Navy, and at the same time must increase the size and missions of the Naval Reserve. It is conceivable, for example, that we could give much of the Caribbean mission over to the Naval and Marine Corps reserves, operating on an augmentation basis to permanently assigned ships. As resources continue to become available, we should also place major combatants in the reserves, so that follow-on ships could be committed to task forces that have taken casualties.

The overwhelming difficulty in any such transformation is that growth in the Navy, accompanied by declines in the active Army and Air Force, would be bitterly fought inside

DoD because of the accompanying transfers of resources and power. Given the ecumenical environment of JCS and the DRB, it seems unlikely that any major changes could occur unless forced on the Department from outside.

One historical thought on that point might be appropriate, however. Prior to World War II, the Army and Navy split the budget, and interservice power, roughly in half. After the Army Air Corps gained temporary autonomy during the war, one of the ways it was able to gain the support of the Army for permanent autonomy (as the Air Force) was with the prospect that the two services, which were once the Army, would each gain a greater piece of both the budget and interservice power as against the Navy. See Perry M. Smith, The Air Force Plans for Peace, at 69-70 (attached). With a "return to normalcy" after more than 40 years of supplying an inordinate portion of the ground manpower and tactical air for NATO, perhaps a reduction in the budget and missions of the active Army and Air Force could be viewed in this historical light.



James H. Webb, Jr.

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